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INTERPRETERS
OF
LUTHER

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF
WILHELM PAUCK

EDITED BY
JAROSLAV PELIKAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Wilhelm Pauck: A Tribute, <i>by Jaroslav Pelikan</i>	1
2. Martin Luther on Luther, <i>by Karl Holl</i>	9
3. Robert Barnes on Luther, <i>by Charles S. Anderson</i>	35
4. John Calvin on Luther, <i>by B. A. Gerrish</i>	67
5. The Elizabethans on Luther, <i>by William A. Clebsch</i>	97
6. Joseph Priestley on Luther, <i>by George Huntston Williams</i>	121
7. N. F. S. Grundtvig on Luther, <i>by Ernest D. Nielsen</i>	159
8. Walther, Schaff, and Krauth on Luther, <i>by E. Theodore Bachmann</i>	187
9. Søren Kierkegaard on Luther, <i>by Ernest B. Koenker</i>	231
10. Adolf von Harnack on Luther, <i>by Jaroslav Pelikan</i>	253
11. Ernst Troeltsch on Luther, <i>by Klaus Penzel</i>	275
12. Paul Tillich on Luther, <i>by James Luther Adams</i>	304
13. Wilhelm Pauck: A Biographical Essay, <i>by Marion Hausner Pauck</i>	335
14. Bibliography of the Published Writings of Wilhelm Pauck, <i>compiled by Marion Hausner Pauck</i>	362
Index	367



WILHELM PAUCK

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ABBREVIATIONS

LW American Edition of *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia & St. Louis, 1955-).

WA *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar, 1883-).

WA Br *Ibid.; Briefwechsel* (Weimar, 1930-).

WA TR *Ibid.; Tischreden* (Weimar, 1912-21).

WML *Works of Martin Luther*; Philadelphia Edition (Philadelphia, 1915-43).

Abbreviations confined in use to one essay are properly indicated at the point of their first occurrence.

WILHELM PAUCK: A TRIBUTE

JAROSLAV PELIKAN

“*OS PAUCI estis superiores*”:¹ these words of Luther’s lectures on I John (albeit in an eighteenth-century edition) express the eschatological consolation of the church as a little flock; and in the American Edition we have therefore translated them: “You, who are few in number, are superior.”²

Yet by a kind of tropological exegesis, which Luther rejected in principle but could never bring himself to give up in practice, these Latin words could be translated, or perhaps paraphrased: “You who are students of Pauck have a definite advantage.” Philologically indefensible though such a translation may be in the light of Luther’s own *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* of 1530, it does express the respect and gratitude which “nos Pauci”—the contributors to this volume, speaking for many hundreds of their fellow students and colleagues—bear for Professor Wilhelm Pauck.

To his students over a period of four decades Wilhelm Pauck has been the teacher we have all striven to emulate and, for that matter, have sometimes presumed to imitate; the devastating critic who never lacked the grace of a twinkle in his eye; the platform virtuoso who lived himself into the person and thought of the great figures in historical theology so convincingly that many of us must still make a conscious effort to avoid supposing that Luther’s favorite gesture was a nervous fingering of the lower lip or that Schleiermacher always mumbled silently for a moment before tossing off an epigram. Many of Professor Pauck’s phrases have become our own phrases, which we now hear our students repeat—and, as often as not, attribute to us. Thus, in one of those Pauckian phrases, he was our professor once, but he is our teacher still.

Nevertheless, it would be both a mistake for us and an embarrassment for him if we were to dwell on the personal aspects of his thought and teaching. Indeed, one of the most precious lessons he has taught us, primarily by indirection and example, is to temper our admiration of any charismatic *Geist*, past or present, with a hard-nosed assessment of the objective situation. Chastened romantic that he is, Professor Pauck has neither permitted his historical imagina-

tion to obscure his identification with "modern man" nor so absolutized modernity as to render the history of Christian dogma incomprehensible. This combination of perspectives—or, to employ a phrase that used to be his before theological faddism wore it out, this "creative tension"—has shaped his role in American scholarship.

Perhaps the best way to summarize Wilhelm Pauck's vocation is to say that he has kept theologians historically aware and historians theologically responsible. Having maintained for many years that "the major trend of contemporary theological thought is marked by a blindness to . . . [the] insistence that Christianity must be understood as a historical movement and that it must be interpreted by the historical method,"³ he has sought to make this insistence an unavoidable element in the theological work not only of his own students but of his colleagues as well. That historical "blindness," significantly, was a disease affecting theological schools which otherwise diverged widely in their methods and conclusions. What Dr. Pauck called "radical theological liberalism" was marked by the attempt to "subject the historical faiths to an examination on the basis of norms which are derived from the sciences or inspired by scientific philosophy," but it seemed to him that "in the light of the history of Christianity, [its] prospects appear questionable."⁴ For although this philosophical theology could not have arisen except in the wake of the radical historical criticism of the Christian tradition, its own historical sophistication was insufficient to support its theological programme. The antidote to theological liberalism proposed during the past generation has been no more richly endowed with historical sophistication; for it "says that church history is merely an auxiliary theological discipline."⁵ This ahistorical bias has made it blind to the actual theological predicament, namely, that "what we need most is historical understanding and not theosophy." One of Wilhelm Pauck's primary tasks has been to demand that theologians, regardless of denomination or party or "school," take history seriously.

He has been no less insistent, though considerably less explicit, in his demand that church historians remain theologically responsible. His programmatic declaration of allegiance to the work of Adolf von Harnack was "interested not primarily in Harnack's contribution to church historical knowledge but in his conception and interpretation of Christianity as an historical phenomenon."⁶ For Professor Pauck, the "conflict between these three principles [theonomy, autonomy, and heteronomy] is the most interesting aspect of the history of religion";⁷ its implication is that Protestantism "must avoid a resus-

citation of antiquated theological and ecclesiastical heteronomies as well as a reliance upon secular autonomies.⁷⁸ Thus it is not the historical investigation for its own sake (if, indeed, there is such a thing) but the historical as a resource for the theological that finally claims his interest and loyalty. In a critique of Harnack delivered in 1939, Professor Pauck spoke out against an historicizing of the doctrine of the Trinity which would explain it "in such a way that it appears merely as the expression of the historical effort of ancient Christians to interpret their faith in terms of the philosophy of their civilization," for this would overlook "the permanent Christian concern around which [the controversies over the Trinity] arose."⁷⁹ Although the primary danger, as he has seen it, has come from a theology that was not historically aware, he refused to go to the opposite extreme of a church history that was theologically irresponsible.

In keeping with this dual commitment, Professor Pauck was one of the first to call the theology of Karl Barth to the attention of the English-speaking world, but he has also consistently affirmed the abiding validity of the liberalism against which Barth protested. When *Karl Barth—Prophet of a New Christianity?* was published in 1931, very little of Barth was known in this country. *The Word of God and the Word of Man* had been translated by Douglas Horton and published in 1928, but it was not until 1933 that the English translation of Barth's *Römerbrief* appeared. Placing Barth's work into the context of the development of Protestant theology during the preceding century, Pauck's monograph probed the deeper meaning behind the Barthian protest against liberalism. He recognized the power of the new emphasis upon the distinctiveness of biblical language, and he acknowledged the validity of Barth's attack upon the easy optimism of a *Kulturprotestantismus*.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Wilhelm Pauck could never be a party-line Barthian; for, as he asserted in the conclusion of his examination of Barth, "we cannot go back behind Troeltsch, Harnack, Ritschl, and Schleiermacher. We can only go beyond them."⁸¹

The commitment to the validity of liberalism as a critique of the orthodox tradition has, if anything, become stronger in the course of Professor Pauck's development. In part, this may well be due to the theological ambience of the 1950's and 1960's, when the historical insights of liberalism were being bypassed in the name of a rechristianization of Reformation theology. Already in 1935 he stated his position:

We do not separate ourselves from the movement of liberalism. We clearly accept the liberation from arbitrary historical or traditional authority which it has achieved. We do our thinking on the basis of the liberal protest against heteronomous authority. We refuse to submit to the decrees of councils and popes, creed-makers, and self-appointed guardians of orthodoxy as we should refuse to consider the validity of the claim of one who should today rise and declare that by the grace of God he had obtained the right to rule over us.¹²

A decade or so later he had to remind those who cheered the rise of a neo-Reformation theology that "the 'Luther Renaissance' and the 'Calvin Renaissance' are the direct results of the preoccupation of historically minded liberal theologians with the Reformation."¹³ And yet another decade later he delivered a critique of the *Church Dogmatics* that was all the more scathing because of his obvious admiration for Karl Barth as a theological mind.¹⁴ Never one to repeat a cliché either in word or in deed, Pauck has in some ways become less conservative rather than more conservative as he has grown older. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that as, in the name of liberalism, he protested against some of the superficiality being propounded by liberals, so, still in the name of liberalism, he protests against an overly facile evasion of its implications and affirms its abiding validity as a theological method.

This refusal to follow the clichés has also been evident in Professor Pauck's mediating position between his native culture and his adopted culture. Many émigré scholars, not least some from Germany, have trafficked on their exotic status and elevated it into a way of life, carefully cultivating their accents and superciliously dismissing American scholarship as shallow and derivative. If anyone had reason to assume such a pose, it was a theological professor who had listened to the lectures of the giants of German theological *Bildung*—Holl and Harnack, Seeberg and Troeltsch. His debt to these men is undoubtedly a great one, and one which he has freely acknowledged. His store of anecdotes about various scholars, especially about Adolf von Harnack, is seemingly inexhaustible, and there always seems to be a *mot juste* for any occasion. To us, for whom these golden names tend to be either reduced to items in a bibliography or elevated beyond all realism into keepers of the flame, he has served as a sympathetic but not uncritical interpreter of the heritage of Teutonic scholarship. But withal he has managed to acquire not merely the trappings, but the *Geist* and the *Gefühl* of American culture, language, and life with remarkable fidelity. A lecture by Wilhelm Pauck is a pleasure not only because of the erudition he con-

veys through it and the analytical insight he applies to it, but also because of the aesthetic gratification of watching a true *Sprachkünstler*, who, like Joseph Conrad or Vladimir Nabokov, is in complete control of the nuances of a language that is not his mother tongue.

Yet another way to express the subtleties of the interrelations described in these several antinomies—and in some respects, the way that comes closest to Professor Pauck's own scholarly work—is to characterize his thought, *pace* Albrecht Ritschl, as an ellipse, with one focus in the Reformation and the other in the modern critical temper. Student tradition at the University of Chicago used to represent him (once, so the story goes, in a skit) "with one foot in the Reformation and the other on a banana peel." Only from today's perspective is it possible to measure what his work as a Reformation scholar has meant. Despite the work of Harvey and others,¹⁵ the English episode in the career of Martin Bucer had not been properly evaluated, leaving a lacuna both in the study of the Continental Reformation and in the research into British Protestantism. Stating a motif which he has not, alas, pursued into later history, Pauck the young historian described the relation between political reality and theocratic idealism¹⁶—a relation which came to play an important part both in Reformed Christianity on the Continent and in Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, and Puritanism in the British Isles. The recent critical edition of Bucer's *De regno Christi* has rightly given attention once more to the discussion of "utopianism" called forth by Pauck's *Das Reich Gottes auf Erden*.¹⁷

But even while his mind was on Bucer, his heart was with Luther, and it may be that some future historian will regard it as Wilhelm Pauck's most important scholarly achievement to have continued in the New World and transmitted to a new generation the interpretation of Luther and of the Reformation that had emerged from the historical and theological work of the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁸ There is, for example, no finer presentation anywhere of Luther's religiousness than Professor Pauck's essay on "Luther's Faith," published both in German and in English.¹⁹ It would likewise be difficult to find a more authoritative summary of Luther's early theological development than the magisterial introduction to the English translation of the *Lectures on Romans* in the "Library of Christian Classics."²⁰ In countless other essays and lectures—many of them, regrettably, not yet in print—this student of Karl Holl has done for American Protestantism what Holl and his colleagues had done in the Old World. He was speaking autobiographically, and not

merely analyzing the impact of Karl Barth upon the American theological scene, when he exclaimed:

But Protestants, particularly those of America, are hardly able to tolerate this confrontation with Luther's teaching! They have lost the sense of the vitality of Luther's Reformation to such an extent that they continually misunderstand some of its most vital tenets.²¹

The confrontation of American Protestantism with Luther's teaching is more real today than it has ever been before, thanks largely to the work of Wilhelm Pauck.

It seems appropriate, therefore, that this volume of essays in tribute to him should combine his interest in the Reformation with his attention to modern theology. Whitehead's familiar *bon mot* that "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato"²² could certainly be matched by the observation that much of Protestant theology has been a series of footnotes to Luther, or rather a series of monographs on Luther.²³ As a result, the *Lutherbild* of a particular theologian or school of theologians is frequently a most reliable index to their understanding of the Christian faith. As the controversial Polish literary critic, Jan Kott, has said of Shakespeare, so we may say of Luther that he "is like the world or like life itself. Every epoch finds in him what it itself is seeking and what it itself wants to imitate."²⁴ Therefore a study in depth of the *Lutherbilder* of several Reformation figures and several "modern" thinkers may illuminate the subtlety of Luther's life and thought by raising the question how each of these men could, with at least some justification, find in him what he did. It may at the same time help to interpret the development of Protestant theology since the Enlightenment, as that theology has repeatedly sought to come to terms with the heritage of the Reformation.

To tell the truth, the perspectives of the contributors to this volume are no less diverse than are those of the "interpreters of Luther" being analyzed here. And that is in its own way the most profound possible tribute to Wilhelm Pauck as a scholar and teacher. Some of us have become more radical because of him; others of us have come to appreciate the Christian tradition as we had never seen it before; yet others have been infected with a relativism which he, at least in principle, repudiates. But all of us have learned the truth of what (if I may be permitted a personal reminiscence) he told a nineteen-year-old boy a quarter of a century ago when, utterly devoid of any academic degrees, I came to discuss with him the prospects of

doing a Ph.D. under him: "Just remember," he said, "that you will never be the same." And we are not the same—neither the same as we were nor the same as Wilhelm Pauck. For none of us will call himself his disciple, even as he, in his own affirmation of the Protestant principle, has refused to be the disciple of any. Thus he has taught us all that

we must learn to be humble in the awareness that it is God, the Lord of all life, who has laid his hand upon us in this crisis. And we must learn to pray: We believe, O Lord, help thou our unbelief.²⁵

N O T E S

¹ *WA* 20, 732.

² *LW* 30, 289.

³ "Adolf von Harnack's Interpretation of Church History," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* (January 1954) p. 14 [*The Heritage of the Reformation* (2nd ed.; Glencoe, 1961), p. 338].

⁴ "The Prospect for Ecumenical Theology Today," *Journal of Religion*, XXV (April 1945) 81 [*Heritage*, p. 364].

⁵ "A Brief Criticism of Barth's *Dogmatics*," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* (May 1957) [*Heritage*, p. 358].

⁶ "Adolf von Harnack," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, p. 13 [*Heritage*, p. 338].

⁷ "The Nature of Protestantism," *Church History*, VI (March 1937) 15 [*Heritage*, p. 175].

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23 [*Heritage*, p. 182].

⁹ "The Idea of Revelation and the Nature of Protestantism," *Harvard Divinity School Bulletin*, XXXVII (April 16, 1940) 15 [*Heritage*, p. 190].

¹⁰ Karl Barth—*Prophet of a New Christianity?* (New York, 1931), pp. 119-21, 102 ff., and *passim*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹² "What is Wrong with Liberalism?" *Journal of Religion*, XV (April 1935) 158 [*Heritage*, p. 322].

¹³ "A Defense of Liberalism," *Journal of Religion*, XXVII (January 1947) 53 [*Heritage*, p. 334].

¹⁴ "Brief Criticism," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* (see note 5), pp. 107-10 [*Heritage*, pp. 353-59].

¹⁵ E. Harvey, *Bucer in England* (Marburg, 1906).

¹⁶ *Das Reich Gottes auf Erden. Utopie und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1928); cf., for example, the discussion of Hooker, pp. 159 ff.

¹⁷ Francois Wendel, "Introduction," *Martini Buceri Opera Latina*, XV, *De regno Christi libri duo* (Paris, 1955), p. xxxix, n. 155.

¹⁸ For his own summary of this work, cf. "Luther and the Reformation," *Theology Today*, III (October 1946) 314-27 [*Heritage*, pp. 3-17].

¹⁹ "Luther's Faith," *Religion in Life*, XVI (Winter 1946/47) 3-11; "Martin Luthers Glaube," *Deutsche Beiträge zur geistigen Überlieferung*, edited by A. Bergsträsser (Chicago, 1947) pp. 58-71 [*Heritage*, pp. 19-28].

²⁰ Wilhelm Pauck (ed. and tr.) *Luther: Lectures on Romans* (Philadelphia, 1961), xvii-lxvi.

²¹ "Luther and the Reformation," *Theology Today*, p. 318 [Heritage, p. 7].

²² Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (Torchbook ed.; New York, 1960), p. 63.

²³ For excerpts from some of these monographs and comments on others, cf. Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther im Spiegel der deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Heidelberg, 1955).

²⁴ Jan Kott, *Szekspir współczesny* (Warsaw, 1965), p. 13.

²⁵ "The Crisis of Religion" in H. Richard Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, and Francis P. Miller, *The Church Against the World* (Chicago and New York, 1935), p. 69.

MARTIN LUTHER ON LUTHER

KARL HOLL¹

LUTHER WAS not the kind of man to be so enamored of his own personality that he became absorbed in himself. He always lived much too vigorous a life for that. He kept his eye on the tasks set for him and took note of his personal peculiarities only when they perceptibly helped or hindered him.

On such occasions, however, he had no inhibitions about telling others whatever he thought about his whole self-image, for he felt that he had nothing to hide. Nor do we find such revelations only in the *Table Talk* or in letters to trusted friends, but in writings intended for publication as well. Sometimes he wrote in this vein to justify his own position. But more often, and precisely when he disclosed his deepest inner life, he wrote to give or to receive pastoral help. Yet he seems never to have felt any concern about determining the criteria for the image which contemporaries and posterity might have of him.

It is well worth assembling these comments of Luther about himself. Of course they do not deal completely with his entire character, for they are far too short. Rather, they lead us much more deeply into his inmost life, and supplement the picture we might have of him on the basis of his deeds alone. It is probable that he knew himself better than anyone else ever did. In any event, the judgment he passed on himself brings to light an important aspect of his makeup.

If one takes up this task, however, he immediately comes upon a surprising fact. Luther's expressions of great self-assurance alternate with grave accusations against himself. Notes of joyous confidence alternate with bitter evaluations of himself and of his entire work. How is this to be explained? Was Luther a vacillating figure who was continually thrown back and forth between opposing moods? Or did his disposition gradually become ever more gloomy, so that by the end of his life he was secretly in doubt about his cause?

In any event, this latter at least was not the case. One has only to read the letters that Luther wrote to his wife shortly before his death to prove that he felt secure in his faith to the very end. Anyone who could joke in childlike faith about his wife's concern for his life must

have had a good conscience about his life's work. "I am concerned that you do not stop worrying. Let the earth swallow us up in the end, and let all the elements pursue us! Is that how you study the catechism and the Creed? Pray, therefore, and let God worry. You were bidden to care for neither me nor yourself. For it is written [Ps. 55:22]: 'Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you.'"² That tension between self-confidence and self-accusation did not arise just in the course of his life's activity. It was present in him from the very beginning and forms a continuing thread in his personality. Yet it does not at all indicate a split or an inconsistency in Luther himself. This tension constituted the only means by which he could maintain both his self-confidence as a reformer and his basic religious consciousness.

Compared to other religious leaders, Luther had a fundamentally more difficult time attaining self-confidence, and especially religious self-confidence. He was not like those men whose strong will, like a natural force, compels them to speak. Neither did he have the direct self-confidence of the prophet who finds his warrant in a personal revelation.³ He had an instinctive distaste for whatever might be based on sudden inspiration not moderated by clear reflection. He could not consider the ancient prophets without assuming that they had "studied" Moses and the writings of their predecessors. His way of arriving at a religious discovery and thereby also a sense of vocation was dialogue with a great "given," i.e., with historical Christianity and its primary source [the Bible]. The truth which he found did not seem to him to be a new discovery, on the basis of which he could have exclaimed, "But I say unto you"; it was only a rediscovery of a perception that had been in eclipse. But this was precisely the point that had from the beginning threatened his self-confidence as a reformer. That primary source had been open to all for a long time. Centuries had drawn their life from it. Could anyone find in it something new, even if only in a limited sense? The more distinctively he saw the implications of his statements, and the more clearly he saw how far back in history his attack reached, the more difficult it became for him to avoid asking himself, "Do you think that all previous teachers have known nothing? In your opinion, must all our fathers have been fools? Are you the only favorite child of the Holy Spirit left in these latter days? Would God have allowed his people to err so long?"⁴ His opponents were not the first to threaten him with these objections. He had raised them against himself from the very beginning. And their effect had been as horrifying as if an

abyss had opened up before him. Depending on the answer to these questions, he was either a messenger of God or an instrument of the devil, a saver of souls or a corrupter of souls.

Moreover, this same question continued to plague Luther recurrently.⁵ He felt a severe sense of oppression with every biblical passage that seemed to contradict his fundamental view,⁶ with every reproach that he felt obliged to take personally, with every bad turn that his cause took,⁷ e.g., the rise of fanaticism, the Peasants' War, the split of Germany, the Turkish threat to the Empire, the unpleasant phenomena in the developing territorial churches. For he always viewed himself as the one responsible for everything and everyone. Thus for him, unlike Zwingli and Calvin, the *Anfechtungen* lasted throughout his whole life. They are an impressive proof of the independence that he preserved in relation to both his reform and his person at all times, and they are a witness, too, to the stern conscientiousness with which he continually examined himself. Yet why for him, in contrast to those other great men, did the clarity once attained not suffice forever? Why was he obliged to fight repeatedly for self-understanding?

To answer this question one must examine the very essence of his character, the region where body and spirit blend together.

Of primary significance for him was the combination of a lively sensitivity with a strong and persevering will. Luther called himself an excitable man, a man of hot temper.⁸ This is true in the sense that he combined a certain amount of natural softness with the sort of natural timidity displayed in the event which led him into the monastery.⁹ He was easily moved to compassion and always had to cry himself out when he suffered a sharp loss.¹⁰ But opposed to this stood a masculine will which immediately set limits to his effusiveness. Luther used to reproach himself if his spiritual tenderness threatened to turn into hypersensitivity. It was against his nature to show others his deepest emotions.¹¹ Indeed he did not tolerate uncontrolled weeping in his own children.¹² In regard to bodily suffering he followed the principle of conquering pain by not thinking about it. He felt that one should not allow himself to become a hypochondriac; one's bodily condition depended on his state of mind.¹³ Luther was downright irritated if his friends extended their sympathy to him when he was not feeling well.¹⁴

This combination reflects the structure of his intellectual life as well. Here again one notices an openness, a need to learn, as well as a lively imagination. He was emotionally moved by words that struck

the feelings, by pictorial representation¹⁵ that reawakened emotions in his own soul. For this reason poetry made a stronger impression on him than the most eloquent prose. He admitted that his preference for the Psalms sprang from this trait of his.¹⁶ But once again his will intervened with the vital requirement that he assimilate the material taken in, make it live, and recreate it inwardly.¹⁷ There was a discriminating taste at work within his sensitive capacity for response—a taste controlled in turn by his will. He did not seek what was complicated but what was simple, even if it be large and full of content. But then, with all the perseverance of his will, he set himself the task of mastering this largeness totally, of assimilating it completely as it was, and of making it into a part of his own being. To things that moved him in this way he could return again and again. “A multiplicity of books does not make one learned; nor does much reading; but a good thing often read, no matter how small—that makes one learned in Scripture and pious as well.”¹⁸ He could never understand how other people, especially in religion, could so quickly exhaust the simple things.¹⁹ For him the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer were things he felt he could never exhaust. Even as an old doctor of theology he was not ashamed, but proud, that he still recited these pieces word by word like a child. How much was contained just in the introduction to the Decalogue: “I am the Lord thy God”!²⁰ His lifelong aspiration was to sink “with quiet spirit”²¹ into these depths until he had fathomed and seen and felt what lay hidden there. It was in this sense that he said that one must “imagine” a text, or “build it into one’s heart.” He intended these expressions quite literally. One should so take the text into himself that a clear picture arises in his own soul; and it should become an image that clings to his heart, an image that is indelible.²² Yet he was forever finding that his own powers did not yet, or at all, attain such an understanding.²³ “You would not believe,” he assured Spalatin, “how much effort a single verse of a Psalm often costs me.”²⁴ Drawing on the same feeling, therefore, he consoled others, “You have come along far enough if during the day, or even in one week, you have learned to make a single verse of a Psalm live within your heart.”²⁵

It is especially noteworthy that Luther, as he admits in the statement just quoted, regularly recited those most impressive passages to himself out loud.²⁶ His concern was to imprint them not only in his memory but on his will. He wanted to cling to the words in order to arrive at their content through them, and to incorporate this content

into his own being. This was especially so with the subject most important to him, religion. Yet even penetrating a biblical text was only a preparation for him; the main thing was to understand it as a "word for life," a summons that addressed the conscience and demanded contemplation.²⁷ Here his final and deepest aspect comes to light, an aspect which he himself never emphasized because it was a matter of course for him, something about which he did not want to boast: his strong moral feeling and lively sense of God as an ever-present reality, setting the tasks of life for him. At this point everything finally came to a focus for him. Only from this point of view does his sense for the simple and the clear take on its full gravity. For he could not bear to remain in uncertainty²⁸ or to make do with mere approximations when it came to the decisive question of life, the question posed by his relation to God. In a serious joke he once called himself an Occamist because that school had no merely relative terms but only absolute quantities.²⁹ He could not rest until he had achieved secure insights; and since the simple was for him the only true and real, he could think only in mutually exclusive opposites.³⁰ One stood either under the wrath of God or under his grace; one is either completely sure of God or one has no God at all. But the same drive to grasp the whole incessantly pushed him into the deepest inner anguish whenever he looked at the relationship of the facts of his own life and activity to that reality. Here was the origin of those "melancholy" thoughts which constantly plagued his will.³¹ This was something quite different from simply getting at the inner meaning of a biblical passage, for he sensed that here his own powers were not adequate to his intended goal.

Luther's geniality depended on such qualities as these. He never lost his capacity for astonishment, and he retained throughout life those childlike eyes that saw the miraculous in the commonplace; for him the great remained great. As if driven by an inner force, he always returned to the same questions and had to work at them with a tension that consumed his whole person, until he had thought them through to a conclusion. Such were the very conditions of his creativity. Thus he found simple solutions which escaped all the wise and clever men of his age because the latter could not decide to commit themselves to the whole of things and to go beyond the limits of their scholastic concepts.

Yet these same talents were responsible for Luther's inability ever to feel that he had completely arrived, in the sense that others could. Even after his doctrine of justification gave a firm ground to his

faith, he was not secure. To be sure, an attack from the outside only had the effect of strengthening his conviction.³² In such cases he had the feeling that he had long ago considered his opponents' objection and had inwardly conquered it. In his own inner life, however, he could always find occasion to begin all over again with his thinking, with his search for God. His "night wars" were, in his phrase, always much sourer than his "daytime wars."³³ For his doctrine of justification involved such a close tie between what was personal and what was objective that any cloud passing over the one might cast a shadow on the other as well. If the thought of his unworthiness overtook him like a storm, and if his highly excitable conscience rebelled against him, then he might also lose the awareness of his *articulus justificationis*. He protected himself against such attacks with the feeling that they would deprive him of a right due him, the right to his God. Yet despite his striving, he could still find himself put back once more into his former situation in the monastery, and he had to fight his way through to a certainty of God all over again.³⁴ When it was all over, he had the feeling that he had recovered, and that the only reason for his struggle was that he had been "beside himself."³⁵ He did suspect clearly, however, that he could not really exist without *Anfechtungen*. He had to agree with Staupitz that they were as necessary to him as food and drink.³⁶ To have no trial seemed to him to be the worst trial of all.³⁷ Had he been spared them completely, he would no doubt have asked himself anxiously whether his conscience was failing. Actually he always had to feel a slight internal pressure to keep his feeling of God alive.

This temperament formed in him a tendency toward melancholy and also toward privacy.³⁸ He recognized such a tendency in himself from his youth.³⁹ In fact he believed that he could maintain the maxim that sadness is innate in man.⁴⁰ Yet he did not give in to this mood when it came over him, but saw in it a danger which he had to counteract. If solitude was good at times,⁴¹ the reverse was also true. "More and graver sins are committed in solitude than in the company of men,"⁴² and "whoever flees the company of men should make sure that he does not fall into the company of demons."⁴³ He therefore cultivated not only music, the comforter in evil times, but also especially the conversation of a small group. He used conversation partly as a diversion, but even more to gain strength from others. Despite the independence of his thought, he still had a vital need for support. He gladly and often showed how grateful he was for the words so easily tossed off by Staupitz or later particularly by

Bugenhagen. In times of dejection they both struck a note that strengthened his self-confidence because they knew how to disguise something serious in a joke.⁴⁴

To be sure, when Luther dealt with other men, he came upon new hazards. Then his tendency toward the simple and his natural softness became dangerous for him. He always treated everyone with the best of faith, automatically seeing himself in others. He let himself be cheated⁴⁵ and taken in,⁴⁶ and could hardly refuse if he saw others in need or in difficulty. He said that while he was a monk there was nothing so difficult for him as the stern rule which prevented him from giving in to the emotions of his kind heart as he wanted to.⁴⁷ He was this way throughout his life. "No one will ever get anything from me by force," he once shouted at his Katie during a marital quarrel.⁴⁸ But if someone appealed to Luther's good nature, he achieved all the more. Whoever knew how to awaken Luther's sympathy or to convince him that he had wronged someone could lead the Reformer into actions that he later regretted.⁴⁹ "When will I ever learn!" he once exclaimed almost despairingly after such a surrender;⁵⁰ another time he described himself even more clearly: "I am a sheep and will always be a sheep, to believe so easily. I let myself be led to pay court to such fellows, when I should follow my own sense. When I supposedly have given a cut to some tyrant or pedant and they are angry about it, I give myself thirty cuts in return as a penance."⁵¹

For such a temperament nothing was less natural than standing before the great public and playing the role of leader. If one can believe Luther about anything, it is what he repeated constantly at the beginning of the conflict—that he would much rather have remained in his corner and that he would have rejoiced if he could have been free both of this present challenge and of his regular teaching position.⁵² He lacked everything that usually encourages gifted men to step forward. He had to confess correctly that he lacked ambition.⁵³ For every uncalled-for, unnecessary act of self-assertion was for him only a temptation of the devil.⁵⁴ Personally, however, he feared the public, also because he feared that his excitability might play him a nasty trick.⁵⁵ After he had taken his decisive step, he was probably brought to higher courage and self-assertion by every opposition that he encountered. Yet even then he had to fight his tendency to withdraw and to abandon those who were beyond instruction. "For I give up easily if they do not want to hear me."⁵⁶ Luther showed another form of the same mood when even

after the first years he longed secretly for martyrdom.⁵⁷ This was the quickest way he saw of freeing himself of all troubles and cares. He had none of that "German aggressiveness" which finds fighting joyful in itself.

He constantly asserted that he had become a reformer without his assent and even against his will. Actually he became a reformer only under the pressure of necessity, under the feeling of an unavoidable obligation to the truth. His consolation was always that he had planned nothing, but had instead been forced along his way while carrying out his office.⁵⁸ He dared to take the first step with his theses on indulgences in the belief that he was only saying what everyone in the church would have to acknowledge. To be sure, when he saw that this was not the case, he felt bound to take a firm stand on his cause. But then he had to identify his cause, as well as to identify himself, for better or for worse, according to the action he had undertaken. Out of the realization that he had to testify to his cause as the truth, he summoned up the courage to give himself the proudest titles. Now he called himself, in defiance of his opponents, a "preacher by the grace of God," a "prophet of the Germans," an "apostle and evangelist to the German lands," and "God's unworthy instrument."⁵⁹ Thus he ascended the highest peak of religious self-confidence; yet this confidence remained wholly impersonal. It was always only the expression of his belief in the importance and the urgency of his cause.

Therefore, no matter how much he boasted, he felt the office conferred on him less as a source of pride than as a heavy burden, under which he sighed in secret. In the exercise of his calling he wrote and preached only under "force and pressure."⁶⁰ In *Table Talk* he once compared himself to Isaiah, and Melanchthon to Jeremiah.⁶¹ On other occasions he more correctly compared himself to Jeremiah.⁶² Although some of Jeremiah's attitude toward the work entrusted to him was actually present in Luther, it never erupted so passionately in Luther as in his spiritual kinsman of the Old Testament. What sometimes tired Luther was not the abundance of work—he managed that easily enough—nor even the ingratitude that he thought he met, but the superhuman responsibility that he was supposed to bear for countless others. Even in the days of the Diet of Augsburg, he publicly stated that he did not like being a doctor of theology and a preacher,⁶³ and that "I would hear no message more gladly than that which discharged me from the office of preaching." "Yet," he continued, "the poor souls don't want that.

And there is a man named Jesus Christ who refuses, whom I follow gladly since surely he has deserved better than this of me.”⁶⁴ These last words show how he overcame that mood of fatigue. It was his never-failing sense of duty that always held him fast and forced him to do his utmost. In the *Table Talk* he judged himself similarly. “If I had only known before that God would require such effort and that he would bring me to this! But now that I have begun it, I will also complete it with him. I would not begin it now for all the world, because of the extreme, great and heavy troubles and anguish. And yet when I see him who called, I do not regret that I began.”⁶⁵

Still one thing more belonged to the peculiar structure of his reformatory self-confidence. The authority that he ascribed to himself found support in the fact that he held a legitimate office conferred on him by the church. Only for a relatively short period did Luther rise to the point of justifying his behavior and his self-confidence as a reformer purely with the objective necessity of his work—in the years from his stay at the Wartburg until the great conflict with the fanatics. In the long run, however, he could not endure such lonely heights. For ordinary preachers, he stressed the principle that neither the universal priesthood nor personal talent in itself gave one the right to the public proclamation of the Word. A formal calling was necessary as well. As a result he felt compelled in conscience to apply this to himself. His priority in rediscovering the gospel did not make his position an exception to the rule. After 1524,⁶⁶ therefore, he began again to lay stress on his doctorate, which he had previously despised as a popish title.⁶⁷ He explained now that he did not want to stress his doctorate for the sake of worldly goods. “But ultimately I would have to despair and despond in the great and difficult cause I bear if I had begun as a sneak without call or command.”⁶⁸ The church itself had granted him his doctor’s title, and in his renewal of the gospel he had only exercised his office as a doctor of Holy Scripture: these facts provided him with an opportunity to connect his own emergence [as a reformer] to the already established order. Only when he felt himself a member of a continuing historical process could he feel completely sure of his divine commission.⁶⁹

Here lay a limit to his reformatory consciousness, a limitation within which he was quite comfortable. He knew that he was called only as a preacher of the gospel. He viewed politics and economic questions as outside his office. Here, moreover, he discerned, and not without reason, that his personal talents were utterly alien to these fields, and especially to politics. He imagined that he might be able

to suppress his gullibility.⁷⁰ Yet actually he found no joy whatever in ruling and commanding. "I don't like to govern. It doesn't agree with my nature."⁷¹

Yet precisely because Luther's reformatory consciousness, as thus specified, came into being only through the conquest of his inner tendencies, here his *Anfechtungen* truly could begin all over again. These trials were harder than those in which he fought for his own personal certainty of God. For in this case the matter concerned not simply himself, but all the others whom he had attracted and for whose salvation he felt responsible. One gains insight here into the paradoxically alarming alternation of his sentiments. For "the devil" reproached him first that he had conducted mass for fifteen years and had therefore committed idolatry;⁷² but then he accused him a second time of the reverse, since he had disturbed the peace of the church and had placed so many souls in jeopardy.⁷³ Luther partially suspected that these trials were related to his physical condition.⁷⁴ He tried, therefore, to counteract them by properly caring for his body. If he felt a trial coming on, he ate and drank more than usual, without appetite, but in the knowledge that even this was a kind of fasting.⁷⁵ In actual conflict with the Enemy, he did not scorn even the crudest household remedies to drive him away.⁷⁶ Yet that was never sufficient. Every time he seriously questioned the justification for his reformation, he had to go through the struggle all over again. In all this anguish and confusion, however, a healthy instinct always led him along the certain path out of his difficulties. Whenever he was seized by anguish at the effects of his teaching, he remembered the condition in which he had found the church before, and the deformation of the gospel which had been and still was dominant.⁷⁷ And every time he clearly perceived all this, the original drive came to life in him again, and he sensed the compulsion that had earlier forced him to speak out, although he would rather have kept silent. It is the same method that Luther used even in quiet hours, as for example when he wrote his *Admonition to the Clergy* from the Coburg. He certainly intended it as self-justification when he drew there a picture of the Catholic Church containing many superstitious folk customs.⁷⁸ In this sort of contrast, where his judgment could not waver, he found his way again. He was, therefore, warm and confident even in prayer.⁷⁹ But this does not mean that he artificially whipped himself up and overcame his feelings of weakness only by means of a kind of self-intoxication. With the memory of that earlier corruption, the full seriousness of the matter became evi-

dent to him again. Once again he felt his duty to the truth entrusted to him, and his duty to God who had shown him the truth. And this very seriousness lifted him out of his previous indecision, for now he stood before a straightforward choice. If the responsibility was heavy for splitting the church, it would have been much heavier, and even unbearable, if he had concealed the truth and caused injury to souls.⁸⁰ He overcame his fears about the injury he had done with the even greater fear of the effects of keeping silent. Here one looks into the very depths of his soul. The sense of duty was his strongest trait. The vitality of this sensation, his willingness to take even a great responsibility upon himself, prevented him from ever allowing his *Anfechtung* to lead him into apostasy.

II

Luther's awareness of serving as the instrument of God gave him a new and decisive criterion for evaluating himself. He now had to assess the relationship which his natural talents and actual achievement bore to the task which God had set for him. Every man with a sense of calling has confronted this question, and his self-image always appears most clearly in the answer he gives, whether he feels his ego to be affirmed or denied in his consciousness of being an instrument of God.

With Luther, the most powerful effect was that his calling always tended to provide him with detachment.⁸¹ When Luther called himself God's "unworthy" instrument, this was always more than the usual pious phrase. He was deeply convinced that he was only a tool, and that otherwise he amounted to nothing.

This is revealed above all in his conviction that he himself was dispensable.⁸² He never gave any thought to the idea that he was the only one who could finish the task to which he saw himself called. "The world will not come to an end when Brother Martin is buried"; "God can create many Doctor Martins"; "if he will not finish the task through me, he will through someone else." Luther repeated these notions constantly.⁸³

After his emergence, therefore, his growing fame only made him anxious.⁸⁴ Of course he rejoiced that his word evoked a response and that his cause grew. But he wished to conceal his person completely behind his work. He was so completely different from the men of the Renaissance that he thought of fame as something from which Christians could only recoil in horror.⁸⁵ Erasmus gave him pain

simply by mentioning him by name, even where this was unavoidable, in a letter to Elector Frederick and thus calling the attention of the whole world to him.⁸⁶ It was even worse that the Elector had spoken well of him.⁸⁷ Even the praise of friends concerning his work made him anxious, because he feared that others might come to expect too much of him.⁸⁸ Luther was thoroughly shocked when people began to call his followers Lutherans. "What is Luther? The teaching is not mine. Neither was I crucified for anyone. . . . How then should I, a poor stinking bag of maggots, live to see the day when they label the children of Christ, who alone is our master, with my wicked name? . . . I am and want to be master of none. I trust only the common, the simple and common teachings of Christ, who alone is our master."⁸⁹ Such an exaltation of his person seemed to him an outright injury to his cause.⁹⁰ Therefore he emphatically discouraged even his closest friends from appealing to his judgment. When Melanchthon once harmlessly remarked that they had "followed his authority" in a certain question, Luther instantly threw the word back in his face. Perhaps Melanchthon had not meant it so seriously, but Luther would not even hear of the expression.⁹¹ And in public he utterly renounced those followers who believed only on his account. "Those alone are righteous who would remain in it [i.e., in the Word] even if they heard that I myself had denied and fallen away from it—which God forbid!"⁹² Thus he always felt relief when he thought he saw his own personal authority in decline.⁹³ At the Wartburg he was happy because the cause seemed to go forward even without him.⁹⁴

He did not even seem to think highly of his own writings. It is astonishing how little artistic joy Luther felt in the creation of his works. According to a note in the *Table Talk* he was very likely full of fresh courage during the first years of the fight. "Then I wrote with joy."⁹⁵ And direct testimonies from that time agree on how much that mood meant for his writing. He became aware of his talents for the first time. He did have to admit to friends how quickly he did everything, what a help his sure memory was to him, and how effortlessly he could find the right expression.⁹⁶ And yet he never achieved any inner satisfaction with what he had done. In his *Epistle to the Galatians* of 1519 he had a momentary joy.⁹⁷ He hoped that his *Sermon on Good Works* would be the best piece he had ever written.⁹⁸ But at once an uneasiness stirred within him regarding even these works: it could all have been said much more clearly.⁹⁹ When at the prime of life he looked back over his entire work as an

author, he called the *Church Postil* his best book—to be sure, for special reasons¹⁰⁰—or the book on the *Bondage of the Will* and the catechism.¹⁰¹ Later he even considered the great *Commentary on Galatians* and the exposition of the closing discourses of Jesus as works that had succeeded.¹⁰² When he judged completely according to his innermost feelings, however, he even found fault with his *Church Postil*.¹⁰³ His oft-expressed wish that all his books might fall into oblivion after they had done their service¹⁰⁴ was intended seriously. People should rather learn to see with their own eyes, instead of seeking their fame by copying his books.¹⁰⁵ He held to this rule himself. He did not even have a list of his writings, let alone have them all carefully collected.¹⁰⁶

Luther did notice that something quite specific was missing in his writings. He was not referring to the artistic perfection that humanism sought. For he never made any pretensions to a “sophisticated” form in that sense.¹⁰⁷ He had a genuine aversion to the affected and stilted mode that permeated the literary style of humanism. The pride that sought to create a “monument for all time” lay far beneath him.¹⁰⁸ But his own creations never satisfied that special innate taste which he cultivated, his sense of what was simply sublime. The Bible stood before him also as a stylistic model. There he found the style which seemed to him the only proper one for religious matters—the art of capturing an entire concept with a few simple words.¹⁰⁹ Sometimes he actually did succeed in reaching this goal, not only in his translation of the Bible, but also in his *Small Catechism*. But in these cases he polished the details endlessly. Usually he had no time for that. In fact, he even omitted this process intentionally.¹¹⁰ Gripped by a certain topic, he refused to falsify his feeling by artificially paying attention to the form. His only intention was to impress what he had to say on the reader in constantly new ways. Yet as soon as his passion cooled, he always found his writing too verbose and the exposition too restless and stormy.¹¹¹ He was always ready to call himself *verbosus*, or more coarsely in German a *Wäscher*.¹¹² To be sure, he was partially aware that the advantage of his kind of writing was that it brought his own personality into view.¹¹³ However, he loved his own peculiarities too little to become elated over this feature. As to his letters, which one really could accuse of *verbositas*, he never considered them stylistic productions at all, again showing his separation from the humanists.

Although he downgraded himself, he exalted others. He saw just

the properties he lacked in Brenz¹¹⁴ and Bugenhagen,¹¹⁵ as well as in Melanchthon, whom he could not praise enough, even later on. They could all write and preach and expound Scripture better than he. And of course the poetry of others was better than his own "foul and vile versifying."¹¹⁶ He was always happy to give priority to someone else. Nor was it only men like Melanchthon whom he respected in this way. Even in comparing himself to the considerably younger Cruciger, he found that he was only the Elijah to Cruciger's Elisha.¹¹⁷ For us the very thought of mentioning Luther and Cruciger in the same breath is shocking. Yet Luther was utterly devoid of envy at the talents he saw in others.¹¹⁸

He dealt all the more harshly with his own personal peculiarities. He scolded himself for being lazy, obtuse, and insensitive¹¹⁹ just when he was working most strenuously and when his worries for the church lay continually on his heart. He spoke of himself in this manner while at the Wartburg, and again at the Coburg.¹²⁰ He immediately called himself "drunk" when he drank a heavy wine that never agreed with him.¹²¹ He said that he grew worse each day,¹²² that he sinned more from day to day,¹²³ that he fell often,¹²⁴ that he felt very little love,¹²⁵ and even that he was burning in the fire of his unfettered flesh;¹²⁶ yet in the same letter, two lines later, he admitted that the surgeon would be the right man for his condition.¹²⁷ At a later opportunity he had to concede that even as a young man he had not had much trouble with sensuality.¹²⁸ What he preached to others—unconditional self-evaluation before God—he applied first, and pitilessly, to himself.¹²⁹ And he made no attempt to conceal such confessions especially from those who thought highly of him. He would have been offended if one tried to treat his confessions as mere exaggerations, or as a kind of monastic self-humiliation. His humility was by no means intended to provoke faint smiles or admiration. He considered such admissions of weakness to be confessions in a full sense. He never failed, therefore, to seek the prayers of those to whom he confessed. Even little things bothered his conscience, e.g., that he occasionally ate or drank too much, or slept too long, or talked too much. Only by confessing his sins to someone else was he able to find release from those greater evils, which he with his earnest conscience condemned as very wicked—such sins as these: "that I do not pray as much or give thanks as much, but am as angry and curse as much as Duke George."¹³⁰ Throughout his life, therefore, private confession was an inner necessity.

For this reason Luther never came to his own defense against the personal reproaches to which he was exposed often enough. Throughout life he firmly maintained the principle he had chosen at the beginning of his public activity. He would defend neither his person nor his position, but ever and only his cause: "Anyone who wants to, may tear me apart."¹³¹ He sometimes avowed that he could perhaps pass the test of the world's judgment if it came to that extreme.¹³² In any event, he would not gladly exchange positions, he said, with the most saintly papist.¹³³ And he ventured to endure even the calumny of the fanatics.¹³⁴ But he never took up his pen to show off these virtues publicly. Indeed, he rejoiced when slanderous writings were directed against him.¹³⁵ He hoped that his cause would all the more surely break a trail by its own force alone.

III

No matter how far Luther went in surrendering his own personality, and even if he felt himself a tool in the hand of God, he still came to a kind of self-affirmation. After his feeling of unworthiness had provided him with detachment, he could impartially evaluate himself and his character. He could view his achievements as if they were those of someone else. For despite all that he found hateful in himself, it was still true that God had made use of him, even him, Martin Luther.¹³⁶ Neither could he deny that great things had been done through him. It was clear that he had been instrumental in helping many souls.¹³⁷ He had brought about a reformation of the church, which was more than five councils had accomplished.¹³⁸ Failure to recognize this would amount to being untruthful and ungrateful to God. Yet if he belonged to his cause, if he praised the rediscovery of the gospel as a gift of God's grace, then he also had to admit his own importance,¹³⁹ at least as the handyman of God's work. To be sure, this was a step that took incredible self-control. For it seemed to be overweening pride when he asserted that God's cause had been helped specifically through him. And pride was, in its very nature and not merely in the judgment of the church, the worst sin of all. But he had to come to terms with that assertion. Luther comforted himself that not only Christ but all the martyrs and teachers of the church, and in fact anyone who began something new, must have had to endure the accusation of pride. If his message was the truth, he must not refuse to take on the appearance of arrogance for the sake of the truth.¹⁴⁰ It was not only his right, but his duty,

to boast that God had opened his mouth and had lent him continuing strength.¹⁴¹ And if at times he marveled that he had done all that had been demanded of him, was it not obvious that Christ alone had done it all in him?¹⁴² Did he not have to admit this before the whole world?

Thus he attained the inner freedom to boast of the transient talents lent to him. He sincerely thanked God for his talents,¹⁴³ and was even angry with himself for not thanking him enough.¹⁴⁴ To be sure, he remained within certain limits. He never thought of considering himself a fully creative man, who "like St. Paul could write from the richness of his own spirit."¹⁴⁵ What he had, he knew he had gained only through the Scriptures. But it would have been both foolish humility and hypocrisy to deny that he had penetrated more deeply into Scripture than others.¹⁴⁶ This part of his self-confidence was so closely related to his whole work that he could not maintain one without the other. Where in his conscience he was sure of his cause, he even dared to attack his antagonists with the declaration: "Thus say I, Doctor Martin Luther, a worthy evangelist of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁴⁷ This was the same "holy" and "unavoidable pride"¹⁴⁸ that he saw in Paul. Its opposite in such circumstances would have seemed to Luther a rejection of Christ.¹⁴⁹ Yet he himself could accept it only with great difficulty. He confessed that earlier those proud words of Paul had offended him inwardly.¹⁵⁰ In the end he did not reject the conclusion that he himself must be the "proud simpleton," ascribing to himself the correct understanding of the gospel.¹⁵¹ In words like these, Luther justified his superiority over others, but in a way that at least prevented any real pride from entering his consciousness. When he boasted that he was more learned in Scripture than all the sophists and papists,¹⁵² or that he had even found much that the ancient fathers had misunderstood,¹⁵³ or that the fanatics and Zwingli could not measure up to him in this subject,¹⁵⁴ he was not boasting of his strenuous scholarly work or of his greater natural talents. He could quite rightly brag of his industry,¹⁵⁵ and he had reason to assert that even those who wanted to surpass him still had him to thank for their best ideas.¹⁵⁶ But he found his real source of strength in his *Anfechtungen*. Although he viewed them as attacks of the devil, they remained for him a gift of God, an advantage, a special blessing. He was firmly convinced that all true men of God had endured similar struggles.¹⁵⁷ He found proof of this in Paul's thorn in the flesh, in the struggle of Jacob, and in the despairing cries for help in the Psalms. He felt in his

heart of hearts that real religious truths arise only in the despair of death.¹⁵⁸ When amid such anguish his teaching continued to offer him the only salvation, he had a proof which no scholarship could attain.¹⁵⁹ If his opponents abandoned certain parts of Christian doctrine or interpreted them differently, as for example the freedom of the will, Luther could only conclude that they had never looked down into the ultimate abyss.¹⁶⁰ Yet it was also essential to his self-perception that he saw the involuntary nature of these experiences. Only then could he regard them as something effected in him from the outside. In this way he could regard the enlightenment brought on by their pressure as a kind of revelation. Even after his liberation, however, the anxiety accompanying such inner agitation continued to shake him. He could not boast of his deep insights without also mentioning the distress under which he came to them. His experience was really meaningful only because in confrontation with the power of God he had sensed his own total powerlessness.¹⁶¹ Without such constant reminders of his infirmity, he thought that his wealth of talent might well have plunged him into the abyss of hell.¹⁶² But the knowledge of his own weakness gave him courage. He could again confidently regard his agonized insights as a work of the Spirit in him.¹⁶³

In view of this religious self-evaluation he could also judge his natural powers with more justice. He saw that of all his traits, he had to fight his passionate nature the hardest; and this clung to him even into old age.¹⁶⁴ In the long view, however, he did not wish his passions to disappear completely. Rooting out all passion would have meant severing the nerve of piety itself. For his piety was always an "affection." His highest moments had been those when God had made him "mad,"¹⁶⁵ when through God he was no longer master of himself.¹⁶⁶ And when he confronted perversion of the gospel, mutilation of the truth, and obstinate lies, then he really had a use for anger.¹⁶⁷ The gospel was by no means a message of gentle peace. It stood in necessary and essential contradiction to the world. Its proclamation always brought with it excitement, confusion, and even irritation.¹⁶⁸ If the task was to restore it to its proper place in a corrupt church, then God might find even the anger of men useful.¹⁶⁹ Under the circumstances, mild and humble advice was worthless. It only bounced off without effect or had at most a transient success.¹⁷⁰ A real breakthrough required "an impetuous spirit like that of Samson when he unhinged the gates."¹⁷¹ He had a vital feeling of the pain that his actions produced in many simple-minded followers

of the old tradition. But he asserted that he could not hurt others more than he had already hurt himself.¹⁷² In addition, he thought he gave the highest proof of love by attacking with all his strength the errors of others.¹⁷³ He willingly conceded that at times his behavior had been too violent; but he also remembered the significant times when he had sinned in the opposite direction.¹⁷⁴ Long after Worms he could not forgive the subdued spirit that he had assumed at the advice of friends, when he should have spoken out like Elijah.¹⁷⁵ In other instances, too, he felt he had been all too moderate.¹⁷⁶ In any event, whenever he compared his way of standing up for the truth to that of Erasmus, he could never regret his own manner. Erasmus had a clever way of treating the grossest superstitions only with scorn,¹⁷⁷ and of assuming an attitude of undefiled searching and doubting with regard to the questions that really mattered.¹⁷⁸ This manner seemed to Luther not only ineffective but also unworthy of the cause. "Christianity is simple, lying open to the light of day. One must take and accept it as it is."¹⁷⁹ Ambiguity was out of place.¹⁸⁰ And religion was far too serious a matter to make a mockery of any aspect of it. "Whoever attacks a ceremony, be it ever so small, must use both edges of the sword."¹⁸¹ Even if others reproached him for "formulating the truth in too irrational a way," yet he would rather speak too harshly than "ever dissemble and conceal the truth."¹⁸²

In this light even his writings looked better to him. Much was lacking in their form, to be sure. But he could not ignore completely the essential advantage they had over more polished works. They had sprung from the direct inspiration of the moment, from vital feelings. He said himself that "emotion makes books."¹⁸³ Luther praised this trait in the Old Testament prophets. When he related their stirring power to the mighty agitation within them, and when in contrast he found fault with anything contrived and artificial,¹⁸⁴ he was also justifying his own style. The "Spirit" had driven him, and did not permit him to keep the nine years' silence of Horace.¹⁸⁵ If he had intended to wait until he was fully satisfied with a work, he would never have written at all. He would have neglected his duty to preach Christ.¹⁸⁶ Luther was also well aware that his hot emotion did carry the minds of others along with him. He knew the power of his words. "If I had wanted to cause trouble, I could have given Germany much bloodshed; I could have directed such a play at Worms that even the emperor would not have been safe."¹⁸⁷ "Believe me, I could do much harm if I wanted (and God be praised that the Ana-

baptists cannot speak like me; they would frighten even us). I could do more harm to theology than Zwingli and all the others, if I did not care for my Lord Christ.”¹⁸⁸ Precisely because he recognized that his talents could cut both ways, he refused to take special advantage of them. He laid claim to just enough to ensure that his way would have a fair hearing along with all the others.¹⁸⁹

In fact, he stated emphatically that the objective content of his writings could bear examination by the highest criteria. When he saw how others treated the Bible, he began “to hate his own books less.”¹⁹⁰ In any event, they achieved their purpose. They rendered truthfully the fundamental teachings of Scripture concerning justification, grace, and the forgiveness of sins. And perhaps it was not such a little task after all to expound these deep truths in the easiest and most universally understandable form possible. He replied with good-humored wit to those authors of ponderous learned works, who turned up their noses at his “little pamphlets.” “Whether making many thick books is a useful art for Christianity, I will let others decide. I would admire, if I could, their art of making thick books; with God’s help at least I will publish more quickly than they by writing a short sermon.”¹⁹¹

He did acknowledge one of his merits, in any event. He used the German language with power again, and taught even his opponents to speak German. The extent of his success here was almost physically palpable. He noted genially that even in the other camp they used his German Bible diligently and tried sincerely “to learn something of his art.”¹⁹² He rejoiced in this success all the more innocently because he did not feel that writing was hard work, though translation was another matter. Like all great masters of language, he was convinced that as soon as a matter was clearly understood, the words came spontaneously.¹⁹³ He was never clearly aware that he was also really creating new forms of language, and that his unique powers of intuition were a substantial help.

He never felt that he should completely renounce the rudeness provoked by certain moods. Certainly that rudeness could go to great lengths. He not only depicted the papacy in the most violent expressions, but he also overwhelmed his opponents with scorn if they seemed to be mere windbags. If they opposed him in heavy armor, he all too quickly concluded that their great array of reasons was sufficient testimony to their bad conscience.¹⁹⁴ Yet in this he was only subject to that partiality to which everyone is driven by enthusiasm for a subject, and especially a religious subject. To fight

wholeheartedly for one's own point of view and at the same time to appreciate that of an opponent "impartially" has never proved possible. As to his harshness, Luther could with some reason point to Jesus and Paul. He pointed out appropriately that their sharp expressions no longer shock us only because we have become so used to them.¹⁹⁵ He thought, however, that he could justify his doubt about the honesty of his opponents. In his exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, he once indicated his reasons. He raised the question whether Paul had been unfair to the Judaizers. How could he be sure that his opponents were enemies of the cross, as he maintained? Was it not thoroughly sinful to say such things behind their backs? Luther justified Paul by observing that a false sermon lacking in morality has a necessary conclusion, and that Paul could, therefore, voice his accusations with confidence. Anyone who, like the Judaizers, did not stand in correct relation to Christ, must be motivated by despair or by a proud ambition for glory.¹⁹⁶ Luther thought he had the right to judge his opponents in the same way. False teaching, stubbornly maintained and blindly defended, must be dependent on some flaw of character. And he had confidence that he could even judge on the basis of two or three words, spoken with someone, whether that man stood in the true faith or not.¹⁹⁷ He openly avowed, therefore, that he did not even consider it necessary in many cases to read the polemical writings of his opponents all the way through.¹⁹⁸ But despite this unfair prejudice, Luther thought that he could say of himself that he kept a "good, friendly, peaceful, and Christian attitude toward everyone."¹⁹⁹ His disposition seemed "too cheerful and generous for him ever to be the mortal enemy of anyone."²⁰⁰ He recognized that Satan could tempt one through the raging of opponents to fall into a similar rage—even though one fought in good faith for God's cause.²⁰¹ In quiet hours he could even see that every heresy concealed a kernel of truth.²⁰² He also admitted that even among the fanatics—he was thinking, for example, of Denck—there were "fine, excellent men." "The Lord has given them excellent endowments; they have knowledge, good speech, grace, and morals."²⁰³ Otherwise, too, he rejoiced in an honest, brave opponent. He had an especially high regard for Latomus,²⁰⁴ and for the same reason he liked Eck better than Erasmus.²⁰⁵ It is quite believable when he claims that even in the heat of battle he was so self-controlled that he overcame all contempt for his opponent,²⁰⁶ and suppressed many rash statements that surged in his pen.²⁰⁷ In

any case he thought he could say that he had never attacked the personal life or the reputation of anyone.²⁰⁸ This assertion becomes understandable when one remembers that the majority of his opponents displayed striking weaknesses of this sort, and that they searched zealously for such items in Luther himself. Even when he threw the sharpest reproach in the face of his opponents, when he labeled them tools of the devil, he believed that he spared them as men. For him that reproach was the same as saying that they were driven by an external power and had committed their perversions and evils involuntarily. This gave him a basis for forgiveness, a genuine sympathy that excluded real hatred.²⁰⁹ We get a glimpse of this conciliatory mood when Luther injected a friendly joke into the hot words of an argument,²¹⁰ or when he suddenly changed his tone and informed his opponent that he felt obliged to intercede for him.²¹¹ The seriousness with which he could pray for his enemies leaves no doubt at least about the sincerity of his motives.

He never could see any advantage in the "sophisticated" style with which the humanists treated their opponents. The cool indifference, the reserve which they expressed, seemed to him inappropriate for sacred matters. But he also believed that he had reason to doubt the sincerity of their underlying motives. He correctly saw that the modesty which they displayed was only the mask of an even greater self-satisfaction.²¹² Their avoidance of obvious expressions for natural things turned out to be a hypocritical affectation.²¹³ And where could one discover what the author's own final and real opinion was? Better an open mockery than this fighting behind masks!²¹⁴ Again, what good was courtesy if the elegant modes of speech concealed carefully calculated needlepricks throughout? Luther disliked this kind of deception even in Melanchthon,²¹⁵ and much more in Erasmus.²¹⁶ And he could correctly observe that openhearted, passionate rudeness was always better and less harmful to others than calculated malice.²¹⁷ Such tricks as Erasmus loved would not affect an utter fool like him at all.²¹⁸ Luther could correctly claim that he had never been malicious.²¹⁹ "It may be that I am somewhat immodest; but I am sincere and honest, and in that regard, better than my opponents."²²⁰

He was much more vexed with his attempts at courtesy, undertaken at the advice of friends, than with his rudeness. "I only perverted things with [courtesy]."²²¹ "If I had listened to my own thoughts, it would have gone better."²²¹ In such cases he rightly felt that he had

been untrue to his real nature. He would always console himself that he had been of service to the gospel anyway, and that he had had genuinely good intentions.²²²

Whenever he felt altogether uninhibited, the phlegmatic Luther could rise to gay self-mockery. He could joke about his beer drinking,²²³ about his angular peculiarities²²⁴ and his harsh pen,²²⁵ and even describe deeply serious experiences in an almost frivolous manner.²²⁶

Luther lived in this contradictory double attitude his whole life. A superficial observer might conclude that he killed one with the other, that he actually negated himself in order afterwards to affirm himself more confidently. But Luther never really let one be submerged in the other; he always held fast to both simultaneously, in such a way that both attitudes rubbed together. Self-purification was a duty imposed on him by his relation to God. It involved a continual process of gaining an objective view of himself, judging himself, and then reaffirming himself by way of comparison. Luther never was and never wanted to be "in the clear," in the sense of contemplating oneself with complete self-satisfaction. If this mood ever had come over him, he would have feared for his soul. He always sought an inner adjustment, therefore, more in the direction of self-negation. One can reproach Luther far more justifiably for excessive modesty than for haughtiness. How unventuresome Luther really was! How much he refused to lay claim to, when he could and perhaps should have taken charge! He never wanted to take control of the Saxon church, as Calvin most certainly did in Geneva. He preferred to leave the territorial lord in control. He was always possessed of the deathly fear that he might seem like a new pope, or even become one.²²⁷

And yet, this aspect of Luther too has a liberating significance. Since he knew how to bind together self-negation and self-affirmation, Luther transcended the inner contradiction which dominated contemporary feelings of personality. In the waning Middle Ages the ideals of humanity were either the absolute self-rejection of the monk or the equally absolute self-affirmation of the strong man of the Renaissance. There was no bridge between them. Luther was able to unite the truth of both because his faith in God encompassed them both. From his certainty of forgiveness came a self-confidence of the highest sort; but it was only a gift of which he could not feel worthy.

Luther established, therefore, a new form of self-perception. Moreover, it did not apply only to superior men. The "consciousness of

being an instrument" of God, in which his self-confidence culminated, was, by his principles, not a privilege that belonged only to certain chosen ones. Every Christian who had found unity with God through justification could and must feel it, too. For everyone was called in his own way by God to some task, and everyone had to confront the problem of inwardly uniting humility before God and a self-confidence in God. The model that Luther here created deeply affected the forms of Protestant life, especially in Germany. Even Goethe's "reverence for himself" is a corrupted aftereffect of Luther's creation.

The true creator of this relentless self-interpretation was not, however, Luther himself. Here, as everywhere, Luther walked in the footprints of a greater one. It was from Paul that he learned to consider himself nothing before God, but at the same time to exult "foolishly" in God. That Luther could imitate even this most personal aspect of Paul confirms how fully he took over his entire manner and made it part of himself. For centuries this rich heritage had been lying buried. Only one who had lived through the inner and outer struggles of Paul was in a position to recover the treasure.

NOTES

¹ Karl Holl (1866-1926), who was to be Wilhelm Pauck's teacher at Berlin, delivered this lecture on "Luthers Urteile über sich selbst" on November 1, 1903, at Tübingen, where he was professor of church history at the time. Portions of it appeared in 1917, but the full text was not printed until the publication of Holl's *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I, *Luther* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1921), from the seventh edition of which (1948), pp. 381-419, this translation has been prepared by H. C. Erik Midelfort. In the footnotes I have transposed references to other editions of Luther, specifically the Erlangen edition and the Enders edition of Luther's letters, to the corresponding places in the Weimar edition. I have, however, omitted the lengthy quotations in Holl's notes. (J. P.)

² *WA Br* 11, 291.

¹³ *WA Br* 8, 79.

³ *WA* 7, 313; 15, 240; 20, 222.

¹⁴ *WA Br* 2, 376.

⁴ *WA* 23, 421; cf. 8, 411, 482.

¹⁵ *WA* 8, 84.

⁵ Cf. *WA TR* 1, 61 and 2, 13;

¹⁶ *WA Br* 8, 107.

but also *WA Br* 1, 122.

¹⁷ *WA* 5, 46; 19, 50.

⁶ Cf. *WA TR* 1, 62.

¹⁸ *WA* 6, 461.

⁷ Cf. *WA Br*, 2, 144-145.

¹⁹ *WA* 8, 684; 45, 11.

⁸ Cf. *WA Br* 3, 270; 2, 44; *WA TR* 1, 7.

²⁰ *WA* 30-I, 126; *WA Br* 5, 409.

Cf. *WA* 28, 191; 31-I, 227; *WA TR*

⁹ *WA Br* 4, 511; 5, 349.

¹¹ 49.

¹⁰ *WA Br* 5, 379.

²¹ *WA* 10-I-1, 728.

¹¹ *WA TR* 1, 36; *WA Br* 9, 367.

²² *WA* 52, 59.

¹² *WA Br* 10, 229.

²³ *WA* 7, 464.

²⁴ WA Br 2, 36.
²⁵ WA 5, 46.
²⁶ Thus this was not simply a practice he had preserved from the recitation of the breviary.
²⁷ WA 31-I, 67.
²⁸ WA 18, 603.
²⁹ WA 6, 600.
³⁰ WA 40-I, 391.
³¹ WA TR 1, 215.
³² WA Br 1, 185; 1, 193-94.
³³ WA TR 1, 238; 3, 341; WA 31-I, 317.
³⁴ WA 31-I, 174; WA TR 1, 62.
³⁵ WA TR 1, 48; 1, 63.
³⁶ WA TR 1, 62.
³⁷ WA 3, 420.
³⁸ WA 1, 526.
³⁹ WA Br 4, 319.
⁴⁰ WA TR 2, 22; cf. also WA 52, 127.
⁴¹ WA 5, 286.
⁴² WA TR 4, 555.
⁴³ WA 40-I, 493.
⁴⁴ WA TR 1, 47.
⁴⁵ WA 14, 214.
⁴⁶ WA 30-III, 297.
⁴⁷ WA 8, 625.
⁴⁸ WA TR 1, 107.
⁴⁹ WA Br 9, 145.
⁵⁰ WA Br 3, 457.
⁵¹ WA 23, 32; cf. WA TR 5, 4.
⁵² WA 7, 463; WA Br 1, 307.
 (Holl's reference to Enders, I, 482, 81 appears to be a misprint. J.P.)
⁵³ WA 10-II, 329.
⁵⁴ WA 2, 454.
⁵⁵ WA Br 2, 44.
⁵⁶ WA 31-I, 209.
⁵⁷ WA Br 3, 169; 3, 173; WA 12, 467; 14, 498; WA TR 1, 35.
⁵⁸ WA Br 1, 211; 2, 44.
⁵⁹ WA 10-II, 105; 30-III, 290; 19, 261; 8, 683; 10-II, 228.
⁶⁰ WA 31-I, 209; cf. WA Br 2, 135.
⁶¹ WA TR 2, 410.
⁶² WA TR 5, 23.
⁶³ WA 30-II, 335; 31-I, 212.
⁶⁴ WA 30-II, 340.
⁶⁵ WA TR 1, 42.
⁶⁶ Cf. Hermann Steinlein, "Luthers Doktorat," *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift* (1912), pp. 757 ff.
⁶⁷ WA Br 3, 2; 3, 167-68.

⁶⁸ WA 30-III, 522.
⁶⁹ WA 30-III, 386.
⁷⁰ WA TR 5, 43.
⁷¹ WA TR 5, 222.
⁷² WA 38, 197; cf. WA TR 1, 61.
⁷³ WA TR 1, 63; 1, 261; 1, 288.
⁷⁴ Cf. note 13; also WA Br 4, 228; 5, 14.
⁷⁵ WA TR 1, 49; 1, 64.
⁷⁶ WA TR 1, 48; 1, 406.
⁷⁷ WA TR 1, 48.
⁷⁸ WA 30-II, 347.
⁷⁹ WA TR 2, 441; WA 30-III, 470; WA TR 2, 455.
⁸⁰ WA 2, 449; WA Br 2, 135; 2, 210-11; 2, 263.
⁸¹ WA Br 2, 74.
⁸² WA Br 1, 140.
⁸³ WA Br 1, 73; 1, 352; 2, 138; 5, 400.
⁸⁴ WA Br 1, 190-91.
⁸⁵ WA 5, 192; 15, 642.
⁸⁶ WA Br 1, 404.
⁸⁷ WA Br 1, 78.
⁸⁸ WA Br 1, 126.
⁸⁹ WA 8, 685.
⁹⁰ WA 15, 78; 15, 70.
⁹¹ WA Br 5, 406.
⁹² WA 10-II, 58.
⁹³ WA Br 1, 100; 2, 163.
⁹⁴ WA Br 2, 363; 2, 364; 2, 376; 3, 388.
⁹⁵ WA TR 1, 215.
⁹⁶ WA Br 2, 36.
⁹⁷ WA Br 1, 513.
⁹⁸ WA Br 2, 75.
⁹⁹ WA Br 1, 513.
¹⁰⁰ WA 23, 278.
¹⁰¹ WA Br 8, 99.
¹⁰² WA TR 5, 323; 5, 204.
¹⁰³ WA TR 1, 488; WA Br 7, 329.
¹⁰⁴ WA 6, 616; 10-III, 176.
¹⁰⁵ WA TR 4, 432.
¹⁰⁶ WA Br 4, 177.
¹⁰⁷ WA 7, 465; 10-II, 329.
¹⁰⁸ WA 19, 176.
¹⁰⁹ WA 2, 604; 5, 329; 5, 477; WA TR 1, 203.
¹¹⁰ WA 2, 183; 6, 157.
¹¹¹ WA Br 2, 191; 2, 273.
¹¹² WA TR 2, 40; WA Br 5, 401; 5, 418.
¹¹³ WA Br 2, 75.
¹¹⁴ WA 30-II, 649-50.

¹¹⁵ WA 25, 492.
¹¹⁶ WA 35, 475; 31-I, 393.
¹¹⁷ WA Br 7, 329; 8, 587.
¹¹⁸ WA 26, 58; WA TR 4, 618.
¹¹⁹ WA Br 2, 356; cf. 2, 347 and 2, 354.
¹²⁰ WA Br 5, 309; 5, 521; 5, 522; 7, 24.
¹²¹ WA Br 2, 337; but cf. WA 14, 205 and WA Br 6, 270; also WA 40-II, 115 and WA TR 4, 580.
¹²² WA Br 1, 60.
¹²³ WA Br 2, 154.
¹²⁴ WA Br 2, 397.
¹²⁵ WA 6, 320.
¹²⁶ WA Br 2, 356.
¹²⁷ WA Br 2, 357; also 1, 344-45.
¹²⁸ WA TR 1, 47.
¹²⁹ WA 6, 161.
¹³⁰ WA TR 1, 269; WA 39-I, 525.
¹³¹ WA Br 3, 160; WA 6, 323.
¹³² WA 23, 29.
¹³³ WA 19, 262.
¹³⁴ WA 15, 217.
¹³⁵ WA Br 3, 515; WA 51, 469.
¹³⁶ WA Br 9, 573-74.
¹³⁷ WA 15, 393; WA Br 5, 332.
¹³⁸ WA 38, 270.
¹³⁹ WA 17, 232.
¹⁴⁰ WA Br 1, 122.
¹⁴¹ WA 15, 27.
¹⁴² WA 7, 275.
¹⁴³ WA TR 3, 89; 3, 320.
¹⁴⁴ WA TR 5, 189; 5, 323.
¹⁴⁵ WA 8, 213.
¹⁴⁶ WA Br 8, 107-08; WA 23, 281; 53, 256.
¹⁴⁷ WA 30-III, 366.
¹⁴⁸ WA 2, 451; 2, 471; 25, 12.
¹⁴⁹ WA 40-I, 180-81.
¹⁵⁰ WA 40-I, 63.
¹⁵¹ WA 40-I, 181.
¹⁵² WA 2, 393; 15, 216.
¹⁵³ WA 19, 350.
¹⁵⁴ WA 23, 34.
¹⁵⁵ WA TR 3, 655; 5, 99.
¹⁵⁶ WA Br 3, 308; WA 38, 114.
¹⁵⁷ See note 40 above.
¹⁵⁸ WA TR 1, 203.
¹⁵⁹ WA TR 1, 146.
¹⁶⁰ WA TR 1, 132; 1, 202; 1, 239.
¹⁶¹ WA TR 3, 506.
¹⁶² WA TR 1, 62; 1, 498.
¹⁶³ WA 18, 774.
¹⁶⁴ WA TR 1, 87; cf. also 5, 380 and 3, 13.
¹⁶⁵ WA TR 5, 69.
¹⁶⁶ WA Br 1, 344; 9, 610.
¹⁶⁷ WA 54, 262.
¹⁶⁸ WA Br 2, 43-44; 2, 42.
¹⁶⁹ WA Br 2, 168; WA TR 2, 311.
¹⁷⁰ WA Br 2, 387-88.
¹⁷¹ WA TR 1, 575; cf. WA Br 2, 168.
¹⁷² WA 6, 286.
¹⁷³ WA Br 2, 432.
¹⁷⁴ WA 6, 320.
¹⁷⁵ WA Br 2, 388; cf. WA 10-II, 17; 10-II, 233.
¹⁷⁶ WA Br 9, 366.
¹⁷⁷ WA TR 1, 185.
¹⁷⁸ WA TR 1, 398; WA 8, 51.
¹⁷⁹ WA Br 2, 431.
¹⁸⁰ WA TR 1, 195.
¹⁸¹ WA TR 1, 185.
¹⁸² WA Br 3, 27-28.
¹⁸³ WA TR 1, 194; 1, 203.
¹⁸⁴ WA TR 1, 185.
¹⁸⁵ WA 6, 157; cf. Horace, *Odes*, III, 30, 1-2.
¹⁸⁶ WA Br 10, 444.
¹⁸⁷ WA 10-III, 19.
¹⁸⁸ WA TR 1, 132; 1, 103; cf. WA 32, 509.
¹⁸⁹ WA 30-II, 650.
¹⁹⁰ WA 19, 177.
¹⁹¹ WA 6, 203.
¹⁹² WA 18, 82; 30-II, 633.
¹⁹³ WA TR 1, 498.
¹⁹⁴ WA 2, 630; 7, 638.
¹⁹⁵ WA Br 2, 44; 2, 168; WA 40-I, 309.
¹⁹⁶ WA 2, 612.
¹⁹⁷ WA TR 2, 369.
¹⁹⁸ WA 25, 27; cf. WA TR 6, 234.
¹⁹⁹ WA 30-III, 470; cf. WA TR 4, 601.
²⁰⁰ WA 9, 304.
²⁰¹ WA Br 2, 274.
²⁰² WA 14, 694.
²⁰³ WA 27, 39; cf. also 40-I, 82.
²⁰⁴ WA TR 2, 189.
²⁰⁵ WA Br 2, 527.
²⁰⁶ WA Br 1, 146.
²⁰⁷ WA 2, 679; WA Br 5, 298.
²⁰⁸ WA 8, 46; 8, 705.

²⁰⁶ *WA* 2, 435; 18, 139.
²¹⁰ Cf. *WA* 38, 143.
²¹¹ *WA Br* 3, 254; *WA* 10-II, 55; cf. *WA* 26, 23.
²¹² *WA* 18, 756; *WA Br* 4, 197.
²¹³ *WA* 14, 471.
²¹⁴ *WA TR* 3, 136; cf *WA Br* 7, 28-39.
²¹⁵ *WA TR* 1, 140.
²¹⁶ *WA Br* 3, 271.
²¹⁷ *WA Br* 2, 59.
²¹⁸ *WA TR* 1, 202.
²¹⁹ *WA* 10-II, 237.
²²⁰ *WA Br* 2, 45.
²²¹ *WA TR* 1, 575.
²²² *WA* 23, 32.
²²³ *WA TR* 1, 7; cf. *WA Br* 10, 64.
²²⁴ *WA Br* 7, 350.
²²⁵ *WA* 50, 549; 50, 577; 54, 237.
²²⁶ Cf. *WA Br* 9, 168; 9, 174.
²²⁷ *WA* 23, 15; *WA Br* 6, 355; *WA* 30-III, 205; *WA Br* 8, 138.

ROBERT BARNES ON LUTHER

CHARLES S. ANDERSON

THE SHOCK waves set up by the Wittenberg tumult over indulgences were not stopped by papal command, imperial injunction, the limitations of geography, or even the barrier of time. From the sixteenth century to our own, students of the history of Christian theology have had to deal with Luther and his thought.

Natural boundaries such as the Bohemian Massif and the Alps did not hinder the new ideas long, nor did the northern seas keep them from Scandinavia, nor the channel from England. In every corner of Europe men had to take some sort of a stand in regard to the new currents. Some opposed them staunchly and managed to turn them aside or back; others used them for their own ends, adapting what was helpful; others were caught up in the tide and swept along. Our story in this brief account is one of adaptation and approbation. Our main characters are Luther and Robert Barnes, an English friend and "interpreter."

Never a major figure, Barnes cannot be compared in significance to the other "interpreters" mentioned in this volume. We must, in fact, spend some time to pull back the curtain of obscurity and to set him in context. Born in Norfolk around 1495 he had come to Cambridge by 1514 and joined the Augustine friars there. His superiors had apparently recognized him as a person of some talent and, in 1517, sent him to study at Louvain for several years.¹

At the time this university had a reputation that rivaled even Paris, and not a few Englishmen gave it preference.² During Barnes's residence it became more famous through the founding of the *collegium trilingue*.³ The English Augustinian remained long enough to see the rise of the humanistic swell that was to sweep much of Europe, and he carried back to Cambridge the seeds of a reform of letters along humanistic lines. There is no direct evidence that Barnes came into direct contact with Erasmus either at Cambridge or at Louvain, although the great humanist was present at Louvain from 1517 to 1521 and it is possible that Barnes went there to study under him.⁴ Whether such contact occurred or not, there is no doubt that our Englishman was influenced by the Erasmian

ideals, for upon his return to his own school he proceeded to institute a reform of learning that followed the pattern of the Dutch master.

Shortly after his return to Cambridge, Barnes was made prior and master of the Augustinians' house of studies.⁵

In this position of authority, he soon initiated a program of reform in learning. The Latin of Terence, Plautus, and Cicero replaced the medieval writers as the efforts, pains, and labors of Barnes and Thomas Parnell fostered a fresh atmosphere of classical learning in the house. Among the students who were drawn to this new learning the name of Miles Coverdale is prominent. Coverdale was both pupil and friend of Barnes, and by 1528 had left his friar's habit behind him and was preaching in Essex against image worship, confession, and the Mass.⁶ It is possible that he was at Cambridge to 1527, when he "began to taste the holy scriptures."⁷ From 1529 he worked with Tyndale in Germany, thus beginning a career that centered on the production of an English Bible.

After the foundations of classical studies had been laid, the Augustinian prior moved to institute a new type of biblical study. As was almost inevitable among the Christian humanists, his attention soon turned to the Scriptures, to which he applied the same type of detailed, linguistic attention as he had to the classical Latin authors. The humanistic urge to return to the sources is evident in Barnes, as he laid aside the intricacies of the Scholastic disputation of Duns and Dorbel (i.e., Byzantine logic) and turned to the study of the Pauline epistles. It is evident that his lectures attracted ready and eager audiences and commanded respect for their real merit.⁸ A contemporary once commented, "Surely he is alone in handling a piece of Scripture and in setting forth of Christ he hath no fellow."⁹

In a short time he became well known for his expositions of Scripture, his lecturing, disputation, and preaching. It should be noted that he combined the common trait of friar-preaching, i.e., an attack upon the prelacy for its pomp and wealth, with humanistic exegetical efforts in his sermons.¹⁰ Whatever the attitude of university officials—and we may assume from later events that it was very much opposed to this type of activity—they were powerless to act, since the Augustinian house was outside their control, and the Austin pulpit, as not included within episcopal jurisdiction, more than once served as a sounding board for reform-minded sermons. Barnes was not brought to bay until he preached in a University church in 1525.¹¹

In 1523 the humanistically inclined prior was advanced to the level of a *Doctor Theologiae*. The exact circumstances surrounding

this event are not entirely clear from the sources. It is generally assumed that his was a Louvain doctorate and that he was made a D.D. at Cambridge by incorporation.¹²

Sometime around 1524 Barnes succumbed to the evangelical attacks of Thomas Bilney, another Norfolk native, fellow of Trinity Hall and, since 1519, a priest. Bilney, whose great concern for the Christian life was evident in his continual fastings and pilgrimages, had experienced a change of mind through the reading of Erasmus' New Testament and some of the writings of Luther and after this conversion began to promulgate his new views with the goal of enlisting others. Barnes and Hugh Latimer were among his most prominent successes. Around this group of three a larger circle came into being, many of whom would have prominent roles in the English Reformation.

Early in the 1520's some men of this general temper and interest began to meet together to discuss current biblical and theological problems. Eventually the place of meeting became the White Horse Inn. Initially there was no reason for secrecy, and it is rather doubtful that the meetings ever were really clandestine, even after the repressive measures of Fisher and the stigma attached to unorthodox views by Henry's writing against Luther came into being. The early group had plenty to discuss without breaking the law, for Luther's writings were not forbidden until the end of 1520 and Erasmus' New Testament, while under a cloud in some university circles, nevertheless had been accepted by Leo X, and Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had largely paid for it.

The meetings were held with some caution after the repressive measures began, and the location of the White Horse Inn—between King's and St. Catherine's, with a handy rear exit onto Mill Street that enabled students from the colleges in the northern part of town¹³ to enter with less risk of observation—may have enhanced its usefulness to those attending.¹⁴

Gradually the preaching of the three main figures—Bilney, Latimer, and Barnes—turned away from the conventional attacks of the day and became increasingly strident in tone. Each sermon and each lecture seemed to be taking them farther from the realm of that which was acceptable. Their fight against abuses, superstitions, false miracles, the worship of saints, too-frequent pilgrimages, over-observance of papal laws, and the mere play-acting they saw among some of the clergy, did not endear them to the hearts of the hierarchy. The attacks were certainly not considered Lutheran or hereti-

cal, but the pressure from the hierarchy caused Latimer to be banned from preaching in St. Edward's Church, Cambridge, on Christmas of 1525. And Barnes leaped into the breach, thus setting in motion the chain of events that would lead him to prison, exile, momentary prominence, and at last to the stake.

As long as Barnes had preached in his own cloister he was not under the jurisdiction of the local bishop, but by venturing out into St. Edward's he lost that protection. Encouraged by his friends Barnes preached a rousing sermon which attacked rashly the pomp and wealth of the clergy in contrast to the beautiful simplicity of the Nativity theme. As an aside he made a comment against the practice of bringing one's Christian brother into court. This statement was later used to identify Barnes with the Anabaptists, who were causing so much trouble on the continent.

The sermon led to incarceration, examination, a hearing before Cardinal Wolsey, public penance at St. Paul's, and two and a half years in prison. Even as a prisoner Barnes continued to work for reform, even assisting the illegal traffic in forbidden books. News came to him of his impending execution, and he managed to escape to the continent.

It was late in 1528 when the coasts of England dropped behind the fugitive and before him stretched the prospect of a new life as an exile on the continent. Nothing definite is known of his actions or route of travel until we find him in Bugenhagen's house at Wittenberg in the summer of 1530. He may have been in Hamburg in 1529 and 1530 during his flight to Wittenberg. The lapse of time between the initial flight and the arrival in Wittenberg hardly suggests that this German city and its leading figure were ardently sought goals for the Englishman. It would seem that the trip was made in gradual stages, and that eventually the path led to the center of Protestantism and to Luther.

Barnes was well received by the Germans, especially by Bugenhagen, who already had had some contact with the English reformers. Under the name of Antonius Anglus he began to study and, later, to write.¹⁵ The period of exile was not wasted, according to Foxe and the evidence of later events.

In the mean season Dr. Barnes was made strong in Christ, and got favour both with the learned in Christ, and with foreign princes in Germany, and was great with Luther, Melanchthon, Pomeran, Justus Jonas, Hegendorphinus, and Aepinus, and with the duke of Saxony, and with the King of Denmark . . .¹⁶

By the end of 1531 two works appeared bearing his name. The *Sentenciae ex doctoribus collectae quas papistae valde hodie damnant...* is a collection of debating material for the reformers which appealed to patristic authority as well as to the Scriptures. The brief volume contains excerpts from the Fathers supporting the various reformation principles. The second work was a vernacular version of the *Sentenciae*, published by Bugenhagen toward the end of 1531 under the title *Furnemlich Artickel, neulich verteuchst von Dr. Antonius aus England.*

It is difficult to imagine a runaway friar, a convicted heretic who had fled punishment, being called into the King's service, but this is precisely what happened in the case of Robert Barnes. In the early 1530's, the newly formed Schmalkaldic League needed support and initiated contact with Henry. Henry also needed allies in the impending struggle with Empire and Pope. These reciprocal needs were to serve as the basis for negotiations that continued throughout the rest of Barnes's life. Henry wanted to negotiate, first of all, about the divorce. He wished to garner support from every corner; but who could work for him in Germany? The obvious answer was Robert Barnes, a man known and respected by the Germans, and whose protestations of loyalty to the King followed the same pointed line as did Tyndale's *Obedience of the Christian Man*.

It became plain to Henry that Friar Barnes had the potential for further use when, in 1531, *The Supplication to King Henry the Eighth* was published in Antwerp. In this treatise Barnes defended himself against clerical attack and laid out a strong case for royal supremacy as opposed to the episcopal domination that he felt was then in effect. The King, eager for support in his plans for royal supremacy, granted Barnes a safe conduct to return to England in 1531.¹⁷ While Barnes did not succeed in turning England or Henry to the position of the Germans, his mission to his homeland was not a complete failure,¹⁸ for in succeeding years his *Supplication* was openly printed with royal approval in England, and this visit marked the beginning of nine years of intermittent service by the friar to the crown. There were certainly no immediate results, but there was no casting-away involved either. This Augustinian runaway was too valuable to the plans of the crown to be alienated or removed at this point. So it was, that despite the efforts of Thomas More to have him arrested, Barnes again left England early in 1532, this time under far different circumstances than before.

Barnes continued to serve as a mediator between the crown and

the continent. In 1534-35, when the cities of Lübeck and Hamburg had representatives in England in response to the royal invitation, Barnes was a member of the theological discussion groups. The failure of this mission did not mean that Henry's interest in the Germans was at an end. Later, in July of 1535, Barnes was sent to Germany. Detailed instructions had been given him which indicated the King's active concern. He was supposed to stop Melanchthon's trip to France and persuade him to turn instead to England; to encourage the Schmalkaldic princes in their firm position against papal power, and to endeavor to learn from them the position they would defend at a church council; and finally, to make known to the princes Henry's wish to join their League, showing them various books of sermons from England that would convince them of the reality of the Reformation there, and preparing for a more formal embassage to be sent later. As a side issue, Barnes was to complain to Duke George of Saxony about Cochlaeus' recent attack on Henry.¹⁹ The envoy also carried letters of accreditation, in which the King calls him "Doctorem Barnes, Capellananum nostrum et. S. Theologiae Professorum."²⁰

He was well received by his friends and managed to arrange the meeting desired by his king. During this period he also finished his *Vitae Romanorum Pontificum*, the first Protestant history of the papacy, and dedicated it to Henry.

The other representatives arrived from England and the discussions began. The political negotiation was completed, and the delegates from England turned to the doctrinal discussion desired by both sides. Barnes reported by letter to Cromwell on December 28 that Bishop Fox was now going to treat of nonpolitical matters at Wittenberg, having presented all that the King desired at the League meeting.²¹ There was a good chance for the outcome to be satisfactory, he felt, for of the Reformers "only Pomeranus resists to the death," and "I do not despair of a happy outcome." Cromwell did the King a high service, Barnes writes, by sending Fox to negotiate, for his wisdom and liberality pleased the Germans. He and Barnes did not agree on all the articles of religion, but the friar had hopes of bringing him to his own position. The letter concludes with the regular appeal for more money; some had arrived, but more was needed by all the ambassadors.

With the arrival of the other two members of the English delegation, Barnes' position decreased notably to one of decidedly less significance than before. The days when he was the person uniquely equipped for negotiations were now past; the preliminary work had

been done, and now the first team of disputants had arrived on the scene. The circulation of Barnes's works had by this time shown his definite Lutheran leanings, and it is evident that Henry wished to be represented before the League and in doctrinal discussions by persons closer to his own position. Barnes had served his purpose, however, and would be of similar value later. He continued to play a role in the discussions, but the figure that now dominated the English delegation was that of Bishop Fox.

The doctrinal discussion lasted from about March 9 to April 8²² and brought forth varying reactions from the Germans. On the one hand Melanchthon noted the length of time involved, but added that although there was hard debate over the articles, "none the less we agreed over many."²³ On the other hand the Elector informed Philip of Hesse on March 20 that his teachers felt he could sooner agree with the Pope than with these English.²⁴ On the twenty-eighth of the same month Luther sent the Elector a translation of the articles upon which both sides had been able to agree, adding that the English were not at all sure that their King would agree to them.

The result of the meeting was the Wittenberg Articles of 1536.²⁵ These sixteen articles are quite plainly based on the *Confessio Augustana* and the *Apology*, but are different from either, for the *Augustana* was a confession of faith and a defense of a position, while the *Wittenberg Articles* represent an attempt at peace. They aim to show how much the Germans will concede in order to add another country to the Reformation cause. The concessions are really quite surprising, especially when we note that the document is associated most pointedly with Luther.²⁶ Although he apparently approved, the articles still do not represent Luther as much as they do Melanchthon, who was probably their author. At least, a comparison with the *Augustana*, the *Apology*, and the *Loci* would indicate such a common authorship.

The *Wittenberg Articles* themselves soon dropped from sight. They found no place in the confessional literature on either side of the channel. They are significant, however, in showing the extent of Lutheran willingness to compromise, and in their subsequent use as a basis for some of the English doctrinal statements, beginning with the *Ten Articles* of 1536²⁷ and the *Bishop's Book* of 1537. The Anglo-German negotiations of 1538 brought them to light again, and part of them got into the *Thirteen Articles* that came out of these discussions. The *Thirteen Articles* were subsequently utilized in the doctrinal formulations of both Edward and Elizabeth.²⁸

After a period of some coolness Henry moved to reestablish contact with the Germans, and invited them to send representatives for discussion, so that perhaps he might enter the League.²⁹ After some correspondence and exchange of personal messengers,³⁰ the Germans agreed to send a delegation to England.

The English were represented by a commission of three bishops and four doctors, with Cranmer as the chairman. It is of special interest for our study to note that Barnes was appointed to the commission, but placed on the German side in the discussion.³¹ This recognition of his doctrinal stance plus the evident hope that he would serve as a mediating figure in the disputation is important for our understanding of his position. He was a definite Lutheran sympathizer, but at the same time a loyal subject of the King, one who was apparently willing to be used at the royal discretion and cast off when not useful. The discussions foundered on the abuses listed by the Germans and the calls for their correction, i.e., for communion in both kinds, for the abolition of private masses and monastic vows, and for the end of clerical celibacy.³² Henry's answer strenuously maintained the very points attacked by the Germans, and plainly indicated that he had no intention of being dictated to by anyone.³³ This last communication ended all hope of agreement. The efforts of the Germans and Barnes to effect a unified doctrinal position based on the Lutheran views had failed.

At the end of 1538 a now familiar pattern repeated itself; Henry again saw himself under increasing Catholic pressure from the Emperor, Scotland, and France. The need for allies was again acute; the Tudor and Cromwell moved to meet the need. The aim was a political alliance without the bothersome overtones of doctrinal agreement. The English movement was on three fronts: toward an alliance by marriage with the House of Cleves; toward unity with the King of Denmark; and toward a renewal of the Anglo-German negotiations in England.

The purely political maneuvering between the English and Cleves that eventuated in the short, unhappy marriage of the King to Anne of Cleves need not detain us here. Barnes was not directly involved in it, although its failure did play a part in his fall.³⁴

In March of 1539 Barnes was sent as an ambassador with full pay,³⁵ together with a companion, to the court of the Danish King, to John Frederick, and to the city of Wismar.³⁶ The choice of the envoy was certainly propitious; Barnes was already known to the King of Denmark, having supported him in the presence of the Eng-

lish monarch during the troubled days of 1534; and he was also a thoroughgoing Protestant, filled with zeal for a unified reformation.

After visiting his friend Aepinus at Hamburg, the friar came to the Danish court and argued there for an alliance between England and Denmark. He informed the Danish King that the Emperor had linked himself with most of the northern countries in the heretical chain which he opposed.³⁷ This demonstration of imperial hostility obscured memories of the English King's earlier fumblings, when he had supported Lübeck against Christian III. The Dane repudiated the Emperor's position and told the English King that there was indeed a possibility of union, but only on religious grounds, and that he would inform the Elector and the Landgrave of the English position.³⁸

Back in Denmark, Barnes's work continued. The Danish King consented to confer with his ally the Elector on the new English proposals,³⁹ and Barnes, this part of his mission accomplished, went to Hamburg to await the royal pleasure. It seemed that all was going well and that success was near at hand; the Protestants had even agreed to send a new team of delegates to England.⁴⁰

The news of the *Six Articles* of 1539 cooled the continental Protestants toward Henry and caused Barnes no little fear. Engaged, up to this very moment, in what had seemed a successful mission for his King, he suddenly found himself without a mission, and also without any assurance that he could even return home with safety. He remained in Hamburg in July, not daring to return, though he was the King's ambassador.⁴¹ When he did hesitantly turn his face toward his homeland and travel to the court he was not accorded the courtesy of an interview with the King, usually shown to returning ambassadors, and left the court without reporting.⁴²

Barnes's fate was sealed by Henry's change of policy and by an untimely sermon preached at St. Paul's Cross in February 1540. The attack on Bishop Gardiner, one of the king's favorites, did not please the conservatives, and the ensuing discussions for correction of Barnes were not satisfactory. On July 30, three Protestants including Barnes were drawn to Smithfield to die for heresy, along with three priests who were to be killed for treason.⁴³

BARNES'S INTERPRETATION OF LUTHER

Thomas More once commented caustically of Barnes that "except such things as the doctrine of the catholyke church teacheth hym, he

hath not of hys owne one true worde.”⁴⁴ If we could be permitted the liberty of cutting out the word “true” in this statement, we would have an adequate description of the work of our subject, for Robert Barnes was most certainly a product of his times. One searches his writings in vain for a flash of originality to match the fire of his assertions; the hope for a novel “hook” upon which to hang his theological system has been proved fruitless; the desire, if not for new concepts, then at least for new approaches is also doomed to disappointment. Barnes simply could not present something which he did not possess, and possession for him did not come by way of original concepts or treatments, but rather quite plainly through the type of research exhibited in the *Sentenciae*. It is evident that our friar never got away from the influence of the sources, whether they were those of traditional doctrine, medieval reaction, or the new winds of Wittenberg.

There is no need to trace the general influence of traditional western Christianity on Barnes. The outline of his theology, properly speaking, is as orthodox as that of any bishop of the realm. On these issues, the matters that More characterized as the “things the doctrine of the catholic church teaches,” Barnes walked unmolested and unchallenged by his opponents, for he was as close to the tradition of the church as they were.

It is possible to see other sources of influence, however. His understanding of the relation of the church to the state, for example, was plainly presaged by the Conciliar movement, by Wycliffe, and by such men as Marsilius of Padua and Occam.

One might also look to the continuing influence of remnants of the Lollard movement in the East counties, where most of the Cambridge students had their origin, as a possible source of the thoughts that set our reformer on his road. The themes of Wycliffe regarding the church and state, justification, the authority of Scripture, predestination, and papal limitation were perpetuated in the East counties to the days of the Reformation, and may well have influenced Barnes, who came to Cambridge from Lynn in Norwich.⁴⁵

The impact of Erasmian humanism on the young friar during his student days at Louvain has already been discussed. The reform in studies at the Augustinian house at Cambridge, moving as it did from a study of scholastic literature to the classics and then to a biblical humanism centered on the New Testament of Erasmus, all indicate a debt to the “Prince of the Humanists.” The biting evaluation of the contemporary church and the papacy—which found expression in works like the *Praise of Folly* and *Julius Exclu-*

sus—and the call for reform based on the “philosophy of Christ” must also have been known to the Cambridge group, although their influence on Barnes can only be conjectured. It is of note, however, that the articles of the Christmas Sermon of 1525 are basically an attack on the abuses which a humanistic reform would have abolished. They are not necessarily evangelical.

Barnes, as noted earlier, was also caught up in the reform consciousness common to the friars, at least as they examined the power wielded and the excesses committed by the hierarchy of their day. The criticism-of-abuses motif can be traced back to the origin of the mendicant orders, and Barnes stands in this stream, as is again evident from the sermon of 1525.⁴⁶

There is no real need to continue this general catalog of early movements and persons from which our subject could have drawn some elements of his material. The rising tide of complaint and demand for reform that began amid the excesses and confusion of the Avignon papacy and the subsequent schism is plainly seen in the protest of Robert Barnes. His roots are sunk deep in the reform-consciousness of his day.

What is of greater interest and significance to us in our study is the third major root of Barnes's position. There is no doubt but that the new winds of Wittenberg served as the main driving force for the theological bark of Robert Barnes, at least after his escape to the continent. The attack on abuses in 1525 could have owed something to Luther's writings,⁴⁷ which were available in England well before that time, but the points of attack were also the common property of all the reform-minded and would not need to be imported from Germany. But once Barnes had taken a theological position and had elucidated it in writing following his flight, then a new note became evident, and there could be no doubt as to its source.

In our examination of the materials for possible points of contact and influence, two preliminary matters should be kept in mind: first, only works of Luther that were in print before the initial writing of the Englishman will be considered; thus, for example, the 1539 work *On the Councils and the Churches*, significant as it is for an understanding of Luther's position, will not be included; second, no attempt will be made either to outline a complete picture of Luther or to present an exhaustive comparison between the German and the Englishman. We are only concerned with presenting sufficient material to show what type of relationship existed. There is also no need to dwell at length on each of the divisions of Barnes's theology.

There is most certainly a change, a development in the position of

Barnes between his earliest public statement, the Christmas Articles, and that which followed. The twenty-five statements drawn from the Christmas sermon, which first pulled Barnes into the arena of controversy with the bishops, present us with certain problems.⁴⁸

Even if one recognizes that the articles are set up to put Barnes in as bad a position as possible, and that his explanations of them are influenced by at least three years in Germany, still one must conclude that they are not particularly Lutheran. Although the Bishop of Rochester made much of the Lutheran aspect in his sermon at St. Paul's, when Barnes and the Steelyard men were publicly shamed, thus obviously connecting the books burned, the Lutheran pestilence across the channel, and the figures kneeling before him during the sermon, still Barnes denies specifically that he was Lutheran at this time.⁴⁹ The articles taken from his sermon seem to bear him out. Though he had certainly been exposed to Lutheran writings at Cambridge, his position was still largely that of the humanist-friar. His conversion under Bilney had not been to a Lutheran understanding, however much the rush of events on the continent may have encouraged the Cambridge group. What happened during the sojourn in Germany would lead to a different emphasis.

Once an escape had been effected, the runaway gravitated to Wittenberg. There the contact with Bugenhagen, with whom he lived; the pleasant relationship with Luther, with whom he ate and disputed in the school;⁵⁰ and the general atmosphere at this center of the German Reformation all had their effects. A mind that had already been conditioned to think in terms of a long-needed reformation of the church, that had in fact openly committed itself to such a position at the risk of its very existence, was a receptive vessel for the concepts of a movement that seemed to be really working when compared with that of England. By 1528, when Barnes arrived in Germany, even many of the princes belonged to the party of reform, and the movement had the official sanction which Barnes dreamed of for his own land. Here was a going concern, one that was producing and bearing fruits. Here also was the giant figure whose writings had since 1517 been kindling fires of resistance all through Europe.

It is small wonder that Barnes was affected by direct contact with the source and fountainhead of the Reformation. The writings which appeared in 1531 show the results of his exposure. As far as Robert Barnes was concerned, the Lutheran concepts were contagious.

The first evidence of his infection with new ideas is his *Sentenciae ex doctoribus*. Here the strident challenge to episcopal abuses has

disappeared, not forgotten but replaced by the central issues of the Reformation. The prime points of the controversy between the Reformers and Rome are occupying the center of the stage when the *Sentenciae* open with the clarion call of the Reformation: Faith alone justifies. In its list of nineteen articles the main issues are presented, issues which Luther and his cohorts had been insisting upon for several years, but which had never really made themselves at home across the channel while Barnes was there: the commands of God are impossible of our own strength; the natural will cannot do anything but sin; even good works have the nature of sin; all should receive the Lord's Supper in both kinds; priests may marry; human ordinances cannot free sinners; private confession is not necessary to salvation; unjust banning does not disgrace the banned; and saints may not be appealed to as mediators.⁵¹ These and other articles conveyed a Protestant-Lutheran position rather than the humanistic concepts voiced earlier.⁵²

The 1531 edition of the *Supplication* is also indicative of his shift to a Lutheran position. Most of the issues raised in the *Sentenciae* are here dealt with in detailed treatises rather than by a mere culling of proof texts from patristic and other sources. To me the theological stance of 1531 and that of the years following seem to be of one piece and not a restless moving back and forth or an appreciable development. The changes and growth in Barnes had taken place in 1528-31, and while there were to be minor shifts in emphasis in the succeeding years, the main line would remain constant. Assuming, therefore, a certain basic consistency of theological position following the 1531 writings, we turn now to examining a few of the major facets of the religious teaching of Robert Barnes.

One cannot attempt to lay out the whole of Barnes's position in this brief essay. What we shall do is to look at three specific areas that demonstrate his interpretation of Luther: free will, the church, and the Christian life.

F R E E W I L L

In his understanding of anthropology Barnes had reproduced the arguments concerning the *status integritatis* which was lost through an exercise of the free will.⁵³ Natural man now lives in a state of corruption and sin, for which he is justly condemned.⁵⁴

Barnes's Augustinian background shows itself in his emphasis on the solidarity of humanity in the sin of Adam. His orthodoxy up to

this point was not in question, but when he moved on to elucidate the results of the Fall for contemporary man, he stepped over the pale of the accepted and joined hands with the Luther who had already written *De Servo Arbitrio*. In fact, the only one of Luther's works to which Barnes specifically alludes is *De Servo Arbitrio*. Even in this instance he makes no mention of the work itself, but rather refers to a position of Erasmus that is refuted in it.⁵⁵ It might be well for us to begin at this point.

The point at issue was whether or not fallen, natural man retained some ability to turn himself to God; whether or not there was the possibility of a self-preparation for the acceptance promised in Christ, i.e., for justification. The rejection of strict Augustinianism by the Synod of Orange and by Gregory the Great had continued through the Middle Ages. The tradition of the church thus defended a semi-Pelagian view of man's capabilities. This position was of key importance in the Reformation.

The whole argument centered on the notion of the free or bound will. When Erasmus wished to strike Luther a truly telling blow he attacked on this front, and Luther acknowledged that the Humanist had thus "seized him by the throat."⁵⁶ If the Roman position could be proven sound, then the whole Lutheran conception of justification by faith alone would tumble like a house of cards. If, however, the will of natural man was not able to turn itself to God, nor to work good, nor to merit anything but punishment apart from the grace of God, then the Lutheran understanding would stand.

By the time that Barnes entered the lists of joust with his English opponents, the main battle had already been fought. The salvoes exchanged by Erasmus and Luther in their two works of 1524 and 1525 were still reverberating throughout the European theological world, and the main tenets of each work were also still being echoed by the religious support troops on both sides of the line. Robert Barnes was an echoer and supporter of Luther in the question of the free or bound will.

The basic Reformation themes of the total depravity of man and the unconditional sovereignty of God are played and replayed by Barnes. While natural man does have free will in the things beneath him,⁵⁷ he cannot prepare himself or turn himself to God of his own powers.⁵⁸ Man can do nothing to equip or prepare himself for the saving action of God.⁵⁹ According to the Scriptures and the Fathers, especially Augustine, no place is left for the pretensions of natural man. Salvation comes purely as a gift of God.⁶⁰

The concept that man retained enough of his original righteousness to enable his turning back to God is attacked by Barnes, as he asserts the *totus homo* anthropology of Luther,

... For all that is in man, harte, soule, flesh, and bone, etc., wyth all theyr workes, is but fleshe, excepte the spirite of God bee there. Every man hath a soule, but by that hee bee not Christes, for then infidels were Christes, but the spirite of Christ maketh hym Christes, and the spirite of God geeueth witness to our spirite that we be the children of God. . . . Wherefore let our spirite as well as hee can, studye hys beste, to apply hymselfe to goodness after the uttermost of his power: and yet is it but wisdome of the fleshe, and hath no witness of God: yea it is but an enemy, and it must needes bee sinne.⁶¹

His opponents' assertion that God's commands imply the ability to obey by a free will is pointedly denied by Barnes.⁶² They do not recognize the purpose of the law, according to our doctor, for it is meant to show man his inabilities and to drive him to recognize his deep and abiding need for the mercy of God. If the commands could be fulfilled by our own power, "then were the spirite of God frustrate, for the spirite of God is not geuen us, to geue commaundementes, but for to geue us strength, to fulfill, and righteously to understand those thinges, that bee commaunded us."⁶³ It is only by the Spirit of God, through grace, that the commands are fulfilled.

The current thinking is simply Pelagianism to Barnes, and he does not hesitate to couple the Bishop of Rochester and the adherents of Duns to the ancient Irish heretic. Even Erasmus, Barnes's guide in reform during his early career, is now pilloried beside the others marked as Pelagians. The conflict between Luther and Erasmus had necessitated a choosing of sides, and Barnes had moved toward the German. In commenting on a description of Pelagianism given by Augustine, Barnes writes,

Don't Erasmus and all the papists teach this way? They say that grace is given in order to dispose us to good works . . . which is nothing else but that grace is given to piety and not to evil. . . . Freedom of the will is not (as Erasmus holds) that which makes the will free to turn itself to good or away from evil. Rather this is the freedom of the will, that it wills whatever it wills freely, and with no compulsion (*coactionis*) and can nevertheless not will anything other than that which it does will.⁶⁴

While there is a need for immutability in the divine picture, there is no necessity for compulsion or coaction.⁶⁵ In the final analysis this matter is part of the "inscrutable will" of God and cannot be

inquired into, according to Barnes. Here, as in the matter of election, he follows Luther in distinguishing between God's manifest and inscrutable will. These categories correspond to the German's *Deus Revelatus* and *Deus Absconditus*.

The nature of fallen man in regard to this problem of free will and action prior to grace is summed up by Barnes when he claims to have proven by invincible Scripture and doctors of great authority

. . . that freewill of his naturall strength, with out a speciall grace, can doe nothyng, but abyde in sinne. Fayne, inuent, exocigate, and dreame, as many holy purposes as we can, as many subtile distinctions, as many good attritions, as many good applications, and all they bee but sinne, till grace come: yea our sleepyng, our eatyng, our drynkynge, our almesses, our prayers, our singing, our ryngyng, our confessyng, our mumblyng, our mournyng, our wayling. Briefly, all that we can doe, is but hypocrisie, and double sinne afore God, till the tyme, that he of hys mercy chooseth us. For as hee sayth, You haue not chosen me, but I haue chosen you.⁶⁶

In answer to the assertion that his position makes God the author of evil, Barnes replies that God since the Fall has had to work with the corrupted nature of man. Some men are by grace become good, others are bad of their own corrupted natures, not because God has made it so. God moves all men to action, lest they be idle, but in this action the evil man does evil, by God's permission in that he does not change their natures. The evil they do, therefore, is the fault of their corrupted natures, and not of God's moving them to action. Barnes seems to leave an opening for the doubts of the world while attempting to insure the righteousness of God, when he puts the real evaluation of the situation in God's hands, not the world's. He notes, "Yet is Gods worke before hymselfe good, though all the worlde say naye."⁶⁷ The continual assertion is that "the living spirit of God is not the author of sin or evil . . ."⁶⁸

In short, a reading of the *Bondage of the Will*, followed by an examination of Barnes's efforts in the same area, will convince one that the second writer is merely repeating the arguments of the first, in a shortened but no more readable form. There is no doubt that Barnes had read and was greatly impressed by Luther's answer to Erasmus. His use of the material from the reply, as well as his reference to the argument of Erasmus, shows his debt in this distinctive argument.

The *Bondage of the Will* also provides us with the materials for Barnes's understanding of the doctrine of predestination. His emphasis on the will of God follows Luther exactly,⁶⁹ as does the insistence

that the divine choice is not based on foreknowledge.⁷⁰ A harsh doctrine of double predestination is asserted in both,⁷¹ and the recourse to an argument based on the *Deus Revelatus* and *Absconditus* (in Barnes the reference is to the manifest and hidden wills of God) is present in both.⁷² The key argument regarding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is found first in Luther⁷³ and then in Barnes. Even the wording is at times almost identical. It is of interest to note also that the final reservations held by Luther on this matter, and his desire to leave it all to the mercy and justice of God without prying or questioning,⁷⁴ is repeated, again in great detail, in Barnes.

In this matter of predestination one must consider, of course, that other theologians had broached the subject with some force in earlier times. The occasional resurgence of the Augustinian view can be seen in figures as widely separated as Gottschalk, Wycliffe, and Bradwardine. The particular approach and emphasis of Barnes indicate however that his Augustinianism in this instance was by way of Wittenberg. The correspondence of points and language is too close to be questioned seriously.⁷⁵

THE CHURCH

The understanding of the church held by Barnes can best be seen in the context of his continual opposition to the ecclesiastical structure proposed by the bishops and, of course, by the Bishop of Rome in particular. At no time is our writer more lively, active, and easy to read than when he is dealing with the doctrine of the church, for at no point did he see more clearly the results of what he regarded as the chicanery of the popes and their adherents. In this discussion he stresses the fact that his quarrel is not with the bishops as such, but with the system which they represent.

But as God is my iudge, and also my conscience, and all my wordes and deedes, and all maner of my liuyng, and conuersation, I did neuer intende, to speake agaynst the Byshops, or els any other man, further then their liuing, and conuersation were agaynst the blessed word of God, and the holy doctrine of Christes Church.⁷⁶

Their perversiōn is too much to bear, and he promises

... if God doe spare mye lyfe, and geeue mee grace, I shall so set it out, if you doe not reuoke it, that it shall bee to your utter shame and confusion: finde the best remedye that you can.⁷⁷

Luther's insistence that the church was in essence of a spiritual and personal nature—rather than the magnificent temporal hierarchi-

cal edifice as seen in contemporary Roman Catholicism—is already well known. His “biblical theological re-interpretation of the Roman Catholic idea of the church as the ‘Mystical Body of Christ’ ”⁷⁸ was of significance not only for him, but also for the whole of the Reformation tradition, including Robert Barnes. While the position was already evident in the early lectures on the Psalms⁷⁹ its most forceful declaration came during the conflict that centered on and grew out of the Leipzig debate. Among the revolutionary manifestos of the summer of 1520, the treatise on *The Papacy at Rome*, directed against Alveldus, clearly demonstrates the understanding of the church as in essence invisible and therefore the object of faith rather than of sight.⁸⁰ Barnes’s understanding is here mirrored perfectly,⁸¹ as in his insistence that the true Christian, one who belongs to the invisible church of faith, cannot be affected by an unjust banning by the visible Roman structure.⁸²

This understanding of the church would be a serious blow to the Roman position if it should stand, for then it would be possible for those who were outside the empirical ecclesiastical structure not only to claim membership in the true church but also to attack and evaluate those who were in authority in the Catholic system.⁸³ This division was inevitable from the Protestant side, for only in this way could such biblical categories as purity and inerrancy be posited for the church in keeping with the New Testament. This was not, of course, possible for them to do in relation to the contemporary Roman edifice. The Protestants could also then maintain their membership in the true church of Christ, even though they were under the ban and cast out of the Roman structure.

It might also be noted in passing that the same argument raised against Luther by Emser, i.e., that his understanding made him “build a church as Plato builds a state that never was”⁸⁴ was identical to that later raised against Barnes when he dared advance the Lutheran view in his writings.⁸⁵ Neither the German nor his English counterpart aimed at a purely spiritualized conception of the church. Luther had stressed the dual nature of the church as being both internal and spiritual, and at the same time external and corporeal,⁸⁶ and Barnes continued this line.⁸⁷

Essentially, however, the church is the communion of saints, e.g., the assembly of those who are true believers, who are in a faith-relationship to Christ. This emphasis in Luther is consistent and is most easily seen in the *Papacy at Rome*, cited earlier. It runs throughout his works, however.

The true church has certain characteristics according to Barnes's conception: it is pure and holy, suffering, universal, and inerrant. In each of these areas the mark of Luther can be seen, although it must be noted that Barnes does stress certain aspects more than Luther. The purity of the church requires the cleansing and purging of papal abuses, say both writers.⁸⁸ The abomination that centers in Rome cannot be tolerated by a church that is called to be pure and without spot.

The understanding of the church as a suffering body seems to be more clearly stressed in Barnes than in Luther, at least in the writings of the same period. While Luther continually emphasizes the suffering of the *individual* believer as part of his *theologia crucis*, it is not until the writing *On the Councils and the Church* of 1539⁸⁹ that suffering is noted *specifically* as a mark of the church. It may be argued, of course, that since the church is made up of believers who are, in turn, experiencing suffering for their faith, it too is characterized by the cross that its members are bearing. We do not deny this possibility, but only point out that suffering, seen as a specific mark of the church and emphasized as such, appears to be stressed earlier in Barnes than in Luther.⁹⁰

The understanding of the church as universal and not limited to either person or place is also shared by our writers. Luther stresses the point in his *Papacy at Rome*⁹¹ and Barnes's position is clear in the *Sentenciae*.⁹²

The understanding of the true church as inerrant is emphasized by Luther in opposition to the claims of the papalists that the inerrancy was to be found in the Roman see.⁹³ The key to the inerrancy of the church is her adherence to the word of God, and when this word is ignored or contradicted by either pope or council the believer has no obligation to continue his subservience to either.⁹⁴

Barnes also insists that the holy church is inerrant in her judgments. At first glance it would seem that he is simply agreeing at this point with his opponents, who made an identical assertion. Here again, however, we must remember that the friar was speaking of the spiritual body of those in a faith-relationship with Christ, and not of the church militant, in Catholic terms, which contains both good and bad. Of this spiritual communion Barnes asserts:

... Shee can not erre, shee cleaueth so fast to the worde of God that is the veritie. . . . Paul calleth her the pillar and grounde of truth, not that shee is so sure of, and in her own strength, but that shee stickeith so fast to the lyuying God, and to hys blessed worde, that is the very true Church. . . .⁹⁵

The ultimate guarantee of the inerrancy of this spiritual communion, therefore, is its relationship to the "God who cannot lie."

Compared to this type of inerrancy, the pretensions of the Roman Church seem, to Barnes, to be almost blasphemous. The criteria of inerrancy are the presence of the Christ, the careful use of God's word, and the avoidance of all the opinions of men that go contrary to the word. The councils and popes do not fulfill these requirements and therefore may err, indeed have erred.⁹⁶

The centrality of the word of God in preaching, hearing, and working is a theme which recurs constantly in Luther. His distinctive understanding of the Christian as a member of a priesthood of all believers was built on this understanding of the church as built upon and sustained by the word of God, and it was an understanding developed in connection with the Leipzig debate.⁹⁷

Since the word, according to Scripture, cannot be preached in vain, it follows that some men must receive it where it is presented in its purity, and thus be made members of the holy church, even though this membership is not subject to sensory proof, since the word is received into the heart. The efficacy of the word causes Barnes to conclude that "where the worde of God is preached truely, it is a good and perfite token that there bee some men of Christes church."⁹⁸

All believers are priests before God. They may choose from among themselves certain individuals to occupy the "office" of leader in the congregation. The choosing—and deposing if necessary—are part of the function of the congregation as an assembly of believers. It is not a task that can be arrogated by any hierarchical structure.⁹⁹ The task of spreading this word is given to all believers, not only to the clergy.

Both this idea of a priesthood of all believers¹⁰⁰ which has the right to handle the word of God and the insistence on the word for all men marked Barnes as a dangerous figure to the English bishops of the day. He, in turn, was at his most vigorous in relation to the suppression of the word of God, and saw this act as prime proof that the papalists were indeed the Antichrist. "How," he asked, "can Anti-christ bee better known then by thys token, that hee condemmeth Scriptures, and maketh it heresie and high treason against the kinges grace for lay men to reade holy scripture?"¹⁰¹

There is another evidence of the presence of the true church which is also tied to the preaching and hearing of the word. If there are works in keeping with the gospel, one may assume that there are believers present (I Thess. 2:13). While it is possible to be deceived

in this matter, since hypocrisy is so subtle and secret, yet "if men doe worke after the worde of God, it is a good token that there bee men of the Churche . . ."¹⁰²

It is of interest to note that while the 1531 edition of Barnes's position limits the marks of the church to those enumerated above, the 1534 printing makes a significant addition that brings the whole into closer conformity to the Lutheran understanding as presented both by Luther and the *Confessio Augustana*. In the second edition the "orderly ministracion of the sacraments, after the blessed ordinaunce of Christ," is added to the marks of the church.¹⁰³

The whole line of Barnes's arguments and statements regarding the sacraments can be found in Luther's work on the *Babylonian Captivity*. Although the Englishman did not make the same type of overt attack as his German friend, limiting himself, except on the Sacrament of the Altar, to more or less oblique forays against the established position, still the insistence on a new understanding of the Lord's Supper does show the intimate connection between the two.

Luther's examination of the whole Roman sacramental system in the *Babylonian Captivity*, his rejection of most of it, and especially his attacks on the mass as sacrificial,¹⁰⁴ the withholding of the cup from the laity,¹⁰⁵ and the whole concept of transubstantiation¹⁰⁶ laid the groundwork for Barnes. Although the Englishman's position on transubstantiation is not completely clear, still the evidence indicates he taught a "real presence" without the "idolatrous" understanding of his bishops. This was not a key issue in the debate between the English church authorities and the runaway, however. His stance was either orthodox enough or ambiguous enough to keep him out of trouble.

In his attack on the patched development of the Roman rite, Barnes is careful to rely only on documents from Catholic sources, lest, as he says, "you should object unto mee that I am a Lutheran."¹⁰⁷

The understanding of the Sacraments as working *ex opere operato* had been seriously challenged by Luther. Faith is the *sine qua non* for benefit from the sacrament.¹⁰⁸ Barnes's stance on this issue is identical to that of the German.

A review of Barnes's writings on the church placed side by side with statements of Luther on the same topic leads one to no other possible conclusion but that the Englishman was deeply indebted to his German friend. Although some of the themes were of more

ancient origin—for example, the denial of transubstantiation by Wycliffe—the particular emphasis and treatment given by Barnes to all of the material is still distinctly Lutheran. Even the addition he makes to the 1534 edition of the *Supplication*, to the effect that the “right administration of the Sacrament” is one of the marks of the church, can be interpreted only as an attempt to come closer to the Lutheran understanding as exemplified in *Confessio Augustana* VII.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

As we continue our brief survey of the possible roots of Barnes's position we turn to his understanding of the Christian life. The concept of good works as part of the Christian life marks the first stopping place in the discussion. Barnes as much as Luther had already hit hard at any understanding of good works as related to justification. The constant intent in both writers was to destroy any place for a merit-consciousness on the part of the man standing before God. Both were attacked on this score for seeming to deny all good works and for opening the floodgates of libertinism. To this charge, first Luther and then Barnes had to reply. The answer of the latter is closely patterned on that of the former, as we would expect in the light of the previous paragraphs.

The whole imagery of good works as the fruits of a living faith, as being called forth by faith, as being limited to the commandments of God rather than to the created laws of men, as being in intimate relation to love to God and fellows, all this and the rest of the picture is contained in Luther¹⁰⁹ and mirrored in Barnes.¹¹⁰ Even the latter's humanitarian emphasis and his distaste for lawyers and lawsuits—as evidenced in his Christmas sermon of 1525 and developed in the writings explaining his position—can all be found in Luther's 1523 treatise on *Secular Authority: to What Extent It Should Be Obeyed*.¹¹¹ There are other possible sources for the Englishman's understanding, of course, such as his friend Bilney or Scripture itself, but it could also represent another tie to Wittenberg.

The whole understanding of the Christian developed by Luther, as someone able to actualize the demands of love by his living faith in his particular spot in society, is continued by Barnes.¹¹² The Christian is to remain in his place and serve there as an ambassador of the God who has called him to the priesthood of faith. Here we are to serve, and here we can best serve, where God has placed us. There is an attack here on the medieval understanding of monasticism, celibacy, and other works or states which were considered to be the

height of the religious life. In its place is set the Christian believer, working and acting in love in his particular vocation.¹¹³

There are also similarities between our two subjects on the matter of Christian obedience. All of the injunctions and arguments pertaining to obedience to civil authorities that are used in Barnes are presaged in Luther. The divine establishment of civil power is stressed by Luther¹¹⁴ as the basis for obedience; Barnes follows suit.¹¹⁵ The same note of nonresistance in matters of civil dominion is to be found in both. Luther writes, for example:

For one must not resist the government with force, but only with knowledge of the truth; if not, you are innocent, and suffer wrong for God's sake.¹¹⁶

The echo of this can certainly be recognized in Barnes.¹¹⁷

It should be noted that whereas both figures set definite limits on the authority of the civil—and spiritual—powers, Luther allows for a greater degree of resistance in this connection than does Barnes. When the state attempts to control the things of the spirit, including the dissemination of vernacular versions of the Scripture, it is the duty of the Christian to resist.¹¹⁸ "Never remain silent," Luther says, "and assent to injustice, whatever the cost, for he who remains silent makes himself an accomplice."¹¹⁹ Even a soldier, a man under orders, must refuse to fight in an unjust cause,¹²⁰ and the Christian pastor must allow himself to be deposed rather than to remain silent in the face of secular meddling in spiritual matters.¹²¹

Luther, with his understanding of the princes as "rare birds in heaven,"¹²² had a realism in regard to the rulers that is completely lacking in Barnes, who never ceased working for his temporal lord and hoped that all would yet be well in the island kingdom.¹²³ His realism in estimating the English bishops is matched only by his complete naiveté in regard to his King. Of course, he was not the only Protestant that Henry fooled.

What may one say in concluding this brief study of the probable roots of Barnes's theology? For one thing, his debt to the concepts of traditional Catholic Christianity is evident at several points. These are of no more concern to us now than they were to his friends and enemies in the sixteenth century. In other areas, especially as seen in the Christmas Sermon, he shows himself to be involved in the general reformatory consciousness of the late medieval church. While no definite conclusions about exact dependence can be drawn from the sources, the overall impression is still one of general indebtedness to what had gone before. And what, in summary, can be said about this

Englishman as an interpreter of Luther? For some the German might seem to be heretic, boor, and firebrand, for others, a Protestant without nerve enough to go all the way, but Barnes, at least after his period as a refugee in Wittenberg, evaluated and accepted the Saxon as a dependable and authoritative source of Christian teaching. Although they were personal friends, it is not Luther the friend but Luther the theologian and reformer who finds a place in Barnes's writings and in his attempts to influence his countrymen. At least some of the Lutheran tinges in the English church came through the mediating activity of this interpreter of Luther.

N O T E S

¹ C. H. Cooper and T. Cooper, *Athenae Cantabrigienses* (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1858), I, 74.

² J. B. Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535* (Cambridge, 1873), p. 565.

³ The noted patron of letters and friend of some of the most eminent scholars of his age, Jerome Busleiden, on his death in 1517 left provision for the founding of a well-endowed college at Louvain. The school was to be devoted exclusively to the study of the three learned languages—Latin, Greek, and Hebrew—and was destined to leave evidence to the ardent support Busleiden wished to give to the Humanists in their struggles at the universities. The move was in good time, for the Humanist party, even with Erasmus as champion, was still a small minority and under strong attack in some areas. The opening of the new college was not accepted peaceably by the conservatives. Barnes no doubt witnessed the disturbances. Cf. Felix Neve, *Mémoire Historique et Littéraire sur le Collège des Trois-Langues à l'Université de Louvain* (Brussels, 1856).

⁴ E. G. Rupp, *Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition: Mainly in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1947), p. 263.

⁵ John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of these latter and perillous days, touching matters of the Church, wherein ar . . . as also out of the Bishops Registers, which wer the doers therof*, by John Foxe (London, 1563), V, 414.

⁶ J. F. Mozley, *Coverdale and His Bibles* (London, 1953).

⁷ Letter from Coverdale to Cromwell, 1527, quoted in Mozley, *William Tyndale*, (London, 1937).

⁸ Mullinger, *op. cit.*, p. 586.

⁹ Hugh Latimer, *Sermons and Remains of Hugh Latimer*, ed. G. E. Corrie, 2 vols. (Parker Soc., Cambridge, 1844-45), II, 389.

¹⁰ Foxe, *op. cit.*, V, 415.

¹¹ For brief accounts of Barnes and Humanism at Cambridge see: Foxe, *op. cit.*, pp. 415 ff.; John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion and Other Various Occurrences in the Church of England during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign: Together with an Appendix of Original Papers of State, Recordes, and Letters* (2 vols.; Oxford, 1824; London, 1725), I, i, 307; John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials, Relating Chiefly to Religion and the Reformation of It, and the Emergencies of the Church of England Under King Henry VIII, King*

Edward VI, and Queen Mary I. With Large Appendixes, Containing Original Papers, Records, etc., (2 vols.; Oxford, 1822), I, i, 568.

¹² Both Mozley, *Coverdale* . . . , pp. 4-8, and the 1573 edition of Barnes's works (*The Whole Works of W. Tyndall, John Frith, and Doct. Barnes* . . . at London, printed by John Daye, 1573), hereafter referred to as *Workes*, maintain that Barnes received the degree from Louvain. Fox, *op. cit.*, VII, 772, simply presents the Proctor's account cited above, which shows us that Barnes paid the required fee at Cambridge and was accepted as a doctor there in 1523. No information can be drawn from this about the location of his work, except for the fact that there was very little time for much advanced work between the time he returned from Louvain and 1523, considering his work in the Augustinian house. The Wittenberg Register later gives him as D.D. (Oxon). This is most probably just an inaccurate guess by the German registrar.

¹³ King's, Queen's, and St. John's.

¹⁴ Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, I, 568-69.

¹⁵ Gardiner is mistaken in his *Dictionary of National Biography* article where he notes that Barnes is called Antonius Amerius. Some writers have also erred by not distinguishing between Antonius Anglus and Edwardus Anglus. The latter was Edward Moros, an individual distinct from Barnes, who matriculated at Wittenberg in the winter of 1538-39. Barnes first enrolled in 1533.

¹⁶ Foxe, *op. cit.*, V, 419.

¹⁷ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509-1547*. J. S. Brewer, Vols. I-IV; James Gairdner, V-XIII, with R. H. Brodie, XIV-XXI [21 vols. in 33 parts; London, 1862-1910], V, 273. Future references to this work will be indicated by *L & P*.

¹⁸ Thomas More, "The Preface to the Christian Reader," *The Workes of Sir Thomas More, Knyght, sometimes Lord Chauncellour of England, wrytten by him in the Englysh tongue*, Wm. Rastell, ed. (London, 1557), p. 761.

¹⁹ Letter of instruction printed in Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, ed. N. Pocock (3 vols.; Oxford, 1865) VI, 142, no. XLII in the Collection of Records. See also *L & P*, VIII, 1077, 1078, 1109; Enders, *Dr. Martin Luther's Briefwechsel* (ed. D. Ernst and L. Enders; trans. Dr. G. Kawerau; 19 vols.; Leipzig, 1903-32), X, 171, 172; Frederich Prüser, "England und die Schmalkaldener 1535-1540," *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1919), XI, 19, 20; Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, *op. cit.*, I, i, 357; *L & P*, IX, 5.

²⁰ Strype, *op. cit.*, I, i, 357; Seckendorf, *Commentarius historicus et apologeticus*, III, 110.

²¹ *L & P*, IX, 354.

²² Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, *op. cit.*, I, i, 354, is completely incorrect in asserting that the English ambassadors went home in January, with the exception of Fox. The letters of Luther and Melanchthon continue to mention the debates, and especially the name of Heath, until the very end of March.

²³ Philip Melanchthon, *Corpus Reformatorum, Philip Melanchthonis Opera*, ed. S. G. Brettschneider (28 vols.; Halle, 1835), III, 52, hereafter referred to as *CR*.

²⁴ Prüser, *op. cit.*, p. 295, prints the original letter.

²⁵ The *Wittenberg Articles* were discovered by G. Mentz in the Weimar archives in 1905. He published them under the title, "Die Wittenberger

Artikel von 1536," in the *Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus* in 1905. There are two versions of the original Latin text; the second is not complete, although it was completed through a printing of an apparent German translation by the Saxon Vice-Chancellor, Burchardt. Mentz prints this version also, since it shows little deviation and is helpful in understanding the Latin.

In the seventeenth century the articles were known and noted only by Seckendorf, though he put aside most of them and printed only the material on the Lord's Supper. He also made reference to four other articles, namely those on the Mass, communion in two kinds, clerical marriage, and monastic vows. He saw them as the opinion expressed by the Elector John Frederick in his letter to Henry VIII of April 1540. This error has been repeated by the *CR*.

English historians, up to the modern era, do not seem to be aware of the *Articles*. Those cited by Dixon, *History of the Church of England from the Abolition of the Roman Jurisdiction* (4 vols.; London, 1878-1902), I, 311, are not the Wittenberg *Articles*. He has merely continued what Collier says in *An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, a Collection of Records* (2 vols.; London, 1708-14), IV, 322, 326 f. James Gairdner, *The English Church in the 16th Century, from the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of Mary*, Vol. IV of *A History of the English Church* by Stephens and Hunt (London, 1902), 162 ff., simply notes the presence of the English delegates at Schmalkalden, and their stay in Germany until the spring of 1536, although in his book, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England* (4 vols.; London, 1908-13), II, 316, he cites the *Articles* and Mentz's work, but has apparently made use of neither. Friedmann, *Anne Boleyn, a Chapter of English History* (2 vols.; London, 1884), II, 104 ff., refers to the English delegation to the Elector, but Barnes is the only one known to him. H. A. L. Fisher, *The History of England, from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of Henry VIII*, Vol. V of *Political History of England*, eds. W. Hunt and R. Poole (12 vols.; London, 1906), p. 361, only says that Fox, Heath, and Barnes "labored for religious concord." He does not appear to know Mentz's work. See Gustave Constant, *The Reformation in England*, trans. R. E. Scantlebury (2 vols.; London, 1934), I, 401.

²⁶ Title: *Artikel der christlichen lehr, von welchen die Legatten aus Engelland mit dem Herrn. Dr. Martino gehandelt anno 1536* in Luther's *Sämmtliche Werke* (67 vols.; Frankfurt/Main and Erlangen, 1832-85), LV, 129 f.

²⁷ The *Ten Articles* were first printed in 1536 by Berthelet and titled, "Articles devised by the Kinges Highnes Majestie, to stablyshe Christian quietnes and unitie among us, and to avoyde contentious opinions, which Articles be approve by the consent and determination of the hole Clergie of the Realme. Anno MDXXXVI." See Burnet, *op. cit.*, IV, 272, n.i, Collection of Records; Wilkins, (ed. and comp.), *Concilia magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae a Synodo Verolamiensi A.D. CCCCXLVI. ad Londinensem A.D. CI)I)CCXVII* (London, 1737; Oxford, 1869-78), III, 817.

²⁸ The *Ten Articles of 1536*, one of the first attempts at the "middle way" for which the Church of England was to become famous, were the result of the Convocation of 1536. It is evident that the Protestant coloring that one does find in the document was imposed upon it from the top, for the majority of the members expressed themselves early in the meeting as being opposed to the Protestant position. (Burnet, *op. cit.*, I, 341; Ellis, *Original Records*, III, 196 f.; *WA Br.* VIII, 220-23). One's analysis of the

relation between the *Wittenberg Articles* and the *Ten Articles* will depend upon his presuppositions. A Catholic writer (e.g., Constant) will stress the discontinuities and how the only agreement is on articles common to both Protestant and Catholic, e.g., on certain of the sacraments, and on the main creedal statements of the past. A Protestant, on the other hand (e.g., Rupp and Jacobs), will see agreements that "were by no means insignificant" (Rupp, *op. cit.*, 113). The agreements that do exist can be summarized as follows: both see the Bible and the three symbols as the standards of faith; baptism is defended from Anabaptist errors; both define penance and mark it as a sacrament, though the *Ten Articles* return to the traditional Catholic divisions; the articles of justification are definitely related; on the use of images and the invocation of saints, there is no deep theological difference, though the *Ten Articles* emphasize these practices more than do those of Wittenberg; the Eucharist receives the same cautious treatment in both, though the problem is more fully discussed in the English work; the number of sacraments is seen as three in both works. The main differences or omissions: the article on Purgatory in the English work has no parallel in the German; no mention is made of the four abuses that so irked the Germans. The Convocation that worked on the *Ten Articles* produced a statement even more confusing than the *Wittenberg Articles*. The attempt to produce peace by concessions to both sides caused only increased confusion and ill will. No one, Catholic or Protestant, was satisfied by the *Ten Articles of 1530*.

²⁹ *L & P*, XIII, 126.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 248-49, No. 148-50; 301; 364.

³¹ Charles Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors from A.D. 1485 to 1559*, ed. W. D. Hamilton, Camden Society (London, 1875-77), I, 81, 82.

³² Burnet, *op. cit.*, VI, 352-53. Original letter printed.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 373-92.

³⁴ Barnes's participation in the Cleves affair was limited to an attempt to gain favor for England at the Danish and Saxon courts. His main purpose, however, was to work for an alliance and not to negotiate a marriage, despite the assertions of some of the older German historians, e.g., Moritz Brosch in Vol. VI of the *Lappenberg-Paulischen "Geschichte von England," Allgemeinen Staatengeschichte von K. Lamprecht*, Abt. I, Bd. IX (Gotha, 1890), II, 344; George Weber, *Geschichte der Kirchenreformation in Grossbritannien* (rev. ed.; Leipzig, 1856), I, 512; Köstlin, *Life of Luther* (New York, 1883) II, 400.

³⁵ *L & P*, XIV, ii, 303; XVI, 198.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, XIV, i, 441-43.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, XIV, i, 192, 445, 452.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 445, 452.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, XIV, i, 561.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *CR*, III, 743; *L & P*, XIV, i, 562.

⁴² *L & P*, XIV, ii, 139.

⁴³ Henry's apparent impartiality in removing those with whom he did not agree may be taken as evidence of his desire to tread a middle way, i.e., not Roman but also definitely not Protestant. The French ambassador remarked that "it was a wonderful sight to see adherents to the two opposing parties dying at the same time, and it gave offense to both" (*L & P*, XV, 483).

⁴⁴ More, *op. cit.*, p. 738.

⁴⁵ Cf. Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*.

⁴⁶ Examples of the preaching of the English friars can be found in the so-called "festaries" or sermon books of the day. The reader may be interested in *Jacob's Well*, ed. A. Brandeis, Early English Text Society (London, 1905), LXXXV, No. 115, and John Mirk, *Mirk's Festiall*, ed. T. Erbe, EETS, Ext. Ser. 96 (London, 1905). Further illustrative material can be found in the two excellent books of G. P. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1926) and *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1933). See also N. G. Pfander, *The Popular Sermon of the Medieval Friar in England* (New York, 1937). For extremely interesting excerpts from medieval documents, many of which depict the attitude of criticism common to the day, the two books compiled by A. G. Coulton are of value. They are *Life in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1904) and *Medieval Panorama, the English Scene from the Conquest to the Reformation* (New York, 1955). The latter book and *Ten Medieval Studies* by the same author are somewhat burdened by an ardent anti-Roman position. The *Ten Studies* does serve, however, as a needed corrective to a work like Cardinal F. A. Gasquet's *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (2 vols.; London, 1890).

⁴⁷ E.g., *The Address to the Christian Nobility*.

⁴⁸ Two factors complicate any study of the Sermon of 1525. First, we should note that the twenty-five articles drawn from the sermon come from the pen of a hostile witness. Barnes himself owned up to them for the most part, but complained that some had been misquoted and presented so as to give a false impression. He further charged that the arguments he used to support or explain the positions expressed were left out by his adversaries. Because of this we must treat the articles with some care if we hope to ascertain Barnes's position from them. If anything they express a more Protestant stance than he actually held at the time, for his accusers were mainly concerned with convicting and censuring the troublemaker and tailored the articles to reach this end.

One other factor complicates a study of the articles, if one is attempting to determine the theological position of their source in 1525-26. The only account of them which we have is from Barnes himself in 1531, and is his recollection of the events which happened five years before. He takes the articles set against him and answers them. While the articles are carefully quoted, the answers may well convey a position that was not fully developed in 1525-26 but that came into existence after a three-year stay in Germany that began in 1528.

These then are our two problems: on the one hand, the articles themselves, taken alone, are quite possibly unfair to the real position of Barnes in 1525, since they are a product of the opposition; on the other hand, the explanation which Barnes makes for them, as well as his account of the happenings, are made five years *post facto* and may contain elements of German origin that were not in his mind when the original events occurred. In each case the tendency is to make the sermon more Protestant than it actually was, although for two entirely different reasons.

⁴⁹ "The supplication of doctour Barnes vnto the moost gracyous kynghe Henrye the eyght with the declaration of his articles condemned for heresy by the byshops." The editions of 1534 (Bydell) and 1548 (Syngleton) have their articles printed identically in the Daye version of 1573. The editions of 1548-73 are in the McAlpin Collection of Union Theological Seminary. The Bydell text has been acquired on microfilm from the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., p. 225.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., *WA* 39, 1, 181; *WA TR* 2, 406-07.

⁵¹ *Sentenciae and Furnemlich Artickel der Christenlichen Kirche/ wie die bey den alten im brauch gewesen und gehalten sind worden/ aber jetzt unbillich von den Papisten/ wieder die heilige geschrift/ ihr eigen Decret/ Concilia/ und schriften der Lerer verdampt werden. Erstlich in latein durch D. Anthonium auss Engelandt zusammen gebracht, newlich, mit einer vorred Joan. Pomerani Pfarrherr zu Wittenberg, verdeutscht (Nuremberg, 1531).*

⁵² It is amusing to note how Bugenhagen, when translating the *Sentenciae* for publication as the *Furnemlich Artickel*, managed to make them even more Lutheran in at least one instance. The first article deals with justification by faith. Barnes cited Romans 3 and quotes, “Arbitramur enim iustificari hominem ex fide sine operibus legis . . .” In the treatise in the *Supplication* he writes in English that “a man is iustified by faythe without the workes of the lawe.” When Bugenhagen, however, translated the portion of the *Sentenciae* in question, he used Luther’s version of the Romans passage and pointedly inserted, “allein durch den glauben.” Cf. *Sentenciae and Furnemlich Artickel*, 1.

⁵³ “Freewill of man, after the Fall of Adam,” *Workes*, p. 268.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 281; *Bekanntnus*, Art. II. The German version is titled: *Bekanntnus dess Glaubens die Doctor Robertus Barus der haligen Schrift Doctor (in Teutschen Lannden D. Antonius Anglus genannt) zu Lunden In Engelland gethon hat, im jar MDXL am XXX des monats Juli, do Er zum Fewr on Ortel vn Recht vnschuldig vnuerhorten Sach, gefurt, unnd verbrennt worden ist. Auss der Englischen Sprach Verteutscht* (Augsburg, 1540 ?). A copy is in the Union Seminary, McAlpin Collection. See also *WA* 51, 445-51.

⁵⁵ *Sentenciae*, Art. 4, marginal note.

⁵⁶ *WA* 18, 786.

⁵⁷ “Freewill of man, etc.,” *Workes*, p. 266.

⁵⁸ *Sentenciae and Furnemlich Artickel*, Art. 4.

⁵⁹ “Freewill of man, etc.,” *Workes*, pp. 266-81.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 267-68.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁶² *Sentenciae and Furnemlich Artickel*, Art. 2.

⁶³ “Freewill of man, etc.,” *Workes*, p. 275.

⁶⁴ *Sentenciae*, Art. 4, marginal note.

⁶⁵ “Freewill of man, etc.,” *Workes*, p. 276.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ “Fayth onely etc.,” *Workes*, p. 236.

⁶⁹ Luther, *Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. Packer and O. Johnston (Westwood, N.J., 1957), p. 209; Barnes, “Freewill of man, etc.” *Workes*, p. 270.

⁷⁰ Luther, *ibid.*, pp. 212-16, Barnes, *ibid.*, pp. 278-79.

⁷¹ Luther, *ibid.*, p. 101 *et al.*; Barnes, *ibid.*, pp. 277-78.

⁷² Cf. e.g., Luther, *ibid.*, p. 170; Barnes, *ibid.*, p. 276.

⁷³ Luther, *ibid.*, pp. 195 ff., 207 ff.; Barnes, *ibid.*, p. 281.

⁷⁴ Luther, *ibid.*, p. 314; *WA* 56, 400; Barnes, *ibid.*, pp. 278-297.

⁷⁵ Barnes always drew more heavily on Augustine in his patristic proof texts than on any of the other Fathers. Like Luther, he limited himself to the North African’s Pauline and anti-Pelagian writings. He had no wish to stress Augustine the churchman or the Neoplatonic.

⁷⁶ “Articles Condemned,” *Workes*, p. 211.

⁷⁷ “That it is lawful . . . to read the holy Scripture,” *Workes*, p. 284.

⁷⁸ Wilhelm Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1961), p. 40.

⁷⁹ Cf. Karl Holl, *Die Entstehung von Luthers Kirchenbegriff, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* (3 vols.; Tübingen, 1948), pp. 296 ff.

⁸⁰ *Works of Martin Luther* (6 vols.; Philadelphia, 1930-43), I, 349, 353, 354-56. Further references will be noted as *WML*.

⁸¹ Barnes, "What the Church Is, etc.," *Workes*, p. 253.

⁸² Cf., e.g., *Luther's Defense and Explanation of All the Articles Which Were Unjustly Condemned by the Roman Bull*, Articles 23 and 24, *LW* 32, 66, 67; see also his *Sermon on Excommunication of 1518*, *WA* 1, 639; and his *Treatise Concerning the Ban of 1520*, *WA* 6, 63-75. Cf. Barnes, Art. 17, *Sentenciae*, "An unjust ban (excommunication—lat) of the pope does not injure (harm) the banned."

⁸³ Barnes, e.g., in 1536 had his *Vitae Romanorum Pontificum* printed, which attempted to analyze the development of the ecclesiastical structure and power of the Roman Church historically. In this first Protestant history of the popes he concluded that the empirical church was an historical growth rather than a divine development, and hence it was definitely open to criticism and evaluation.

⁸⁴ *WA* 7, 683; *WML*, III, 394.

⁸⁵ More, *op. cit.*, pp. 741-42.

⁸⁶ *Sermon on the Ban*, 1518, *WA* 1, 639; see also his *Treatise Concerning the Ban of 1520*, *WML*, II, 38-39.

⁸⁷ "What the Church Is, etc.," *Workes*, p. 249.

⁸⁸ E.g., *LW* 44, 90 *et al.*; Barnes, *Supplication*, pp. 199, 197.

⁸⁹ *WA* 50, 509-653; *LW* 41, 3-178, esp. 164 f.

⁹⁰ Barnes, *Supplication*, pp. 245, 184. Cf. also "That it is lawful . . . to read the holy Scripture," pp. 286, 289, 290; "The Disputation between the Byschoppes and hym," p. 225; "Fayth onely, etc.," *Workes*, p. 226.

⁹¹ *WML*, I, 349, 361, 350.

⁹² *Sentenciae*, Art. 6, marginal note; "What the Church is, etc.," *Workes*, p. 245; *ibid.*, p. 248.

⁹³ E.g., *Bondage of the Will*, p. 120.

⁹⁴ E.g., *Explanation of the Articles Debated at Leipzig* (1519), *WA* 2, 406, 404; also *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles* (1520), *LW* 32, 81.

⁹⁵ "What the Church Is, etc.," *Workes*, p. 245.

⁹⁶ *Sentenciae*, Art. 8; *Supplication*, pp. 194, 202; "What the Church Is, etc.," *Workes*, pp. 247-48.

⁹⁷ Cf. his letter to Spalatin, December 18, 1519, in Enders, *Luther's Briefwechsel*, II, 279 ff.; *Treatise on the New Testament*, *LW* 35, 100, 102 f.; *Open Letter to the Christian Nobility*, *LW* 44, 127 ff.; *Babylonian Captivity*, *LW* 36, 112 ff.; *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, *LW* 31, 354 ff.

⁹⁸ "What the Church Is, etc.," *Workes*, p. 250.

⁹⁹ E.g., *LW* 36, 112 f.; Barnes, "What the keys of the church are, etc.," p. 262.

¹⁰⁰ At one point Barnes writes, "Are . . . lay men not from the congregation or the Church? . . . We are to be priests with archbishops, bishops, deacons and popes . . ." *Furnemlich Artickel*, Art. 6, marginal note.

¹⁰¹ "That it is lawful . . . to read the holy Scripture," *Workes*, p. 282.

Some of the most passionate passages in all the writings of Barnes are devoted to this subject of the word and its rightful place in the church. In words reminiscent of the prophets of the Old Testament, he prays:

"O Lord God, where art thou? why sleepest thou? why sufferest thou this blasphemy? . . . Rise up, thy enemyes doe preuayle. Thy enemyes doe multiplye, shew thy power, defend thy glory. It is thy contumely and not ours, what haue we to doe with it but alone to thy glory. Reuenge this cause or thy enemyes shall recken it not to bee thy cause. O thou eternall God though our sinnes haue deserued this, yet looke on thy name, yet looke on thy veritie. See howe thou art mocked. See how thou art blasphemed, yea and that by them, that haue taken on them to defend thy glory . . . yet now for the glory of thy name, gueu some man strength to defend it, or els shalt thou bee clearely taken out of the hertes of all men. Wherefore most gracious Lord, of thy mercy and grace I beseech thee, that I may haue the strength to defend thy godly word to thy glory and honour, and to the utter confusion of thy mortall enemyes. Helpe good Lorde helpe, and I shall not feare a thousands of thyne enemyes. In thy name will I begyn to defend this cause . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 284.

¹⁰² "What the Church Is, etc.," *Workes*, p. 249.

¹⁰³ "What the holy church is and whereby shee may be known," *Workes*, p. 255.

¹⁰⁴ *LW* 35, 97-98; 36, 35 f. Barnes, *Sentenciae*, Art. 19. "Of the origianall of the Masse," *Workes*, p. 356.

¹⁰⁵ E.g., *LW* 35, 321 ff.; 36, 19-28; 32, 55 ff.; *WML*, III, 303; see also *LW* 32, 56 ff., and *WA* 2, 742, *Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament*. Barnes, *Sentenciae*, Art. 9. "That all men are bounde to receive the holy communion under both kyndes under the payne of deadly synne," *Workes*, p. 301.

¹⁰⁶ *LW* 36, 28-35.

¹⁰⁷ *Workes*, p. 357. This statement may be interpreted as being a denial of any Lutheran tinges in his teaching, or it may simply be a means for insuring that his treatise will not be cast out without an examination because it is "Lutheran." In view of the position enumerated it would seem that the second explanation fits the situation better than the first. Some writers, e.g., Dugmore, *The Mass and the English Reformers*, p. 95, maintain that Barnes was not Lutheran, at least in his understanding of the mode of presence in the sacrament. As we have tried to demonstrate, no clear conclusion is possible in this particular connection. But one cannot take the statement in the *Sentenciae* about "lest you object that I be a Lutheran" as proof of any real independence. He is simply trying to insure that a reading will be granted, since he is citing only accepted Catholic sources.

¹⁰⁸ E.g., Luther, *LW* 35, 87 f.; Barnes, *Sentenciae*, Art. 17.

¹⁰⁹ *LW* 31, 363 ff.; 367.

¹¹⁰ Cf., e.g., Barnes, "Fayth onely, etc.," *Workes*, pp. 233, 237.

¹¹¹ *WA* 11, 229 ff.; *WML*, III, 228 ff.

¹¹² Barnes, "Freewill of man, etc.," *Workes*, p. 272.

¹¹³ We need not dwell on this topic. One might consult in passing *WML*, I, 370-71; *LW* 32, 56; 36, 101; 44, 175-79; Barnes, e.g., "That by God's woord it is lawful to Prieste that hath not the gifte of chastitie, to marry wives," *Workes*, p. 331; *Sentenciae, Furnemlich Artickel*, Arts. 3, 13, 39.

¹¹⁴ E.g., *LW* 44, 50, 91-95, 100.

¹¹⁵ Foxe, *op. cit.*, V, 435: "That men's constitutions, which are not grounded in Scripture, bynde not the conscience of man under the payne of deadly sinne," *Workes*, p. 293.

¹¹⁶ *WML*, III, 269.

¹¹⁷ Barnes, *Workes*, p. 295; *Supplication*, p. 184 *et al.*

¹¹⁸ *WML*, II, 50; III, 257; *LW* 44, 100; Barnes, "That men's constitutions, etc.," *Workes*, p. 294.

¹¹⁹ Eivind J. Berggrav, *Luther Speaks* (London & Redhill, 1947), p. 10; see *WA* 28, 286, 359.

¹²⁰ *LW* 46, 130.

¹²¹ *WA* 31-I, 196. Quoted in Rupp, *Righteousness of God*, 305.

¹²² *WML* III, 258; *LW* 21, 345.

¹²³ *Supplication*, pp. 183, 184, 190.

JOHN CALVIN ON LUTHER

B. A. GERRISH

MARTIN LUTHER and John Calvin were, by common consent, the two most eminent figures of the Protestant Reformation.

There were other distinguished leaders in both Germany and Switzerland—Melanchthon and Zwingli, for instance—to say nothing of national heroes in other lands. But they do not quite measure up to the stature of the two giants, who can justly be compared only with each other. One naturally expects, then, that the question will have been asked frequently, almost too frequently: What is the relationship between these two? How, in particular, did they think of each other? In actual fact, scholars in the English-speaking world seem to have been strangely uninterested in setting the two continental reformers side by side, even when confessional allegiance might have compensated for patriotic indifference. The theme “Luther and Calvin,” with variations in approach and content, has been handled rather more regularly in German,¹ occasionally also in French and Dutch.² And, of course, the more general studies, such as the biographies of Calvin, always have something more or less weighty to say on the theme, even if only incidentally.³ But the literature in English is virtually nonexistent.⁴

One reason for the delinquency of British and American scholarship in this respect is perhaps the tendency to concentrate mainly on the *Institutes* and (rather less) on Calvin’s Commentaries. The casual reader of the *Institutes*, who is not skilled in identifying unacknowledged debts or anonymous opponents, could certainly be pardoned for concluding that Calvin had never heard of Luther. Although the pages of Calvin’s systematic work bristle with citations from biblical, patristic, scholastic, and classical authors, no explicit reference is made to the great German reformer. In the Commentaries, to be sure, the veil of anonymity is lifted from time to time, and Luther is openly mentioned, often, though by no means always, to illustrate a piece of faulty exegesis.⁵ But the most important sources for our theme are among the least read: namely, Calvin’s correspondence⁶ and the so-called “minor theological treatises.”⁷ For this reason, and also because some of the pertinent materials are not even available in English translations,⁸ I devote a good deal of

space, in what follows, to direct quotation of Calvin's most important judgments on Martin Luther.

I

A glance at the dates of some of the essays devoted immediately to our theme (1883, 1896, 1959, 1964) reveals that the sacred festivals of Protestantism—the birthdays or deathdays of the Reformers and the appearance of the definitive edition of the *Institutes*—have been the chief stimulus to publication. Approaches to the theme have been various. The personalities of Luther and Calvin have been contrasted, with inevitable assistance from ethnology and sociology: the impetuous Teuton is set beside the precise Frenchman, the peasant's son beside the boy who grew up among the gentry.⁹ Likewise, the respective theologies of the two Reformers have been compared, and an attempt made to locate the points of difference.¹⁰ Finally, their actual personal relationships and opinions of each other have been reviewed and evaluated.¹¹ I think it can be said, however, that a special underlying concern often binds together essays which seem, on the surface, quite different in approach. Indeed, *all* the essays which originate from the continent of Europe show traces, some more and some less, of this concern: to see what light can be shed by the relationships between Luther and Calvin upon the division which separates the two communions that are descended from them. And here, perhaps, a word of caution may be called for.

We cannot help looking back on the Reformation in the light of four centuries of confessional mistrust. This is particularly plain in the essay by the Dutchman, A. Eekhof, written during the First World War. He concludes his theme, "How did Calvin think about Luther?" with an extraordinary remark from Harnack, who professed to see in the war a confirmation of the fact that Calvinism really does have another spirit than Lutheranism. Harnack had written:

The war shows us that the Reformed territories of Western Europe and America stand over against us with a lack of understanding which makes them susceptible to every defamation. We German Protestants are still just as isolated as three hundred years ago.¹²

Eekhof was able to point to another, possibly wiser statement of Harnack's, published the very same year (1917), in which the German historian reaffirmed his belief in the power of Christianity to induce a sense of unity among the nations. But if, comments Eekhof, it is in fact true that the confessions stand against each other, then another

German scholar, August Lang, has shown the way to future reconciliation: we are to learn from the example of Luther and Calvin that the Evangelical Church, despite all its divisions, is called to brotherly unity. With this one would not wish to quarrel. But it does already remind us, at least implicitly, that Calvin's situation was not ours, since we are being invited to go back beyond the experience of confessional animosity.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized at the outset that Calvin did not think of himself as "Reformed" in the sense of inner-Protestant polemics. Calvin was not a Calvinist, but an Evangelical, and what he thought about Luther can only be understood from this viewpoint. He identified himself wholly with the common Protestant cause and never faced the Wittenbergers as the sponsor of a rival movement. This was at no time made more plain than when Calvin learned of the struggle between the Saxon Lutherans and Heinz von Wolfenbüttel (1545). He immediately obtained permission from the Genevan authorities to hold a special service of intercession, and from his pulpit he exhorted the people of Geneva: "I am not speaking of Geneva alone, but of all towns and territories where the gospel is proclaimed. . . . May we set ourselves apart? May we say, 'They are far away from us'? No, they belong to the Church, and we are their members."¹³ Moreover, as is well known, Calvin testified to his solidarity with the Lutherans by accepting the Augsburg Confession.¹⁴ Of course, the eucharistic debates repeatedly menaced relations between Calvin and the Lutherans, but it is common knowledge that on the points at issue between Luther and Zwingli, Calvin recognized the validity of Luther's case.¹⁵ And he did not permit even the bitterness of his debate with Joachim Westphal to shake his confidence in the German reformer, whose memory he continued to cherish.

II

We may say, then, that Calvin's churchmanship and evangelicalism prevented him from being narrowly confessional. Nevertheless, the plain fact is that his affection for Luther was occasioned by the generosity of Luther himself. Calvin's earliest remarks on the Saxon reformer were inclined to be censorious. But he was utterly disarmed by the news that he himself was more kindly judged in Wittenberg. Not that he ever recanted his early estimate of Luther's character and opinions. Rather, he was enabled to set the negative judgments within the context of a warm admiration for the person and insight

of the older man. Further, he learned to view the beginnings of the Reformation from an historical perspective which did not demand of him a plain Yes or a plain No to Martin Luther, but rather led him to adopt the stance of a critical disciple. And, as often happens with strong-willed disciples, he would leap vigorously to his master's defense and yet claim for himself the right to criticize him freely.

Luther and Calvin never met, and it may be that Calvin's understanding of Luther was hampered by his ignorance of German. This, at any rate, was the accusation brought against him by the reformers in German Switzerland, as we shall see. Similarly, when the Lutheran Hesshusius began his polemics against Calvin, the Swiss reformer was embarrassed by the fact that his opponent attacked him in German. A third party, Wolph, thoughtfully sent Calvin some selected passages translated into Latin, and explained: "You, most learned Calvin, who are a Frenchman by race and do not understand German, no more understand the insults he spews out against you than I would if insulted in Arabic."¹⁶ We may take it, then, as an established fact that Calvin knew Luther directly only through such of his writings as had been written in Latin or else translated from German.

Further, if Luther and Calvin never encountered each other face to face, neither can one speak of a correspondence between them. We have but one letter from Calvin to Luther, and none from Luther to Calvin. It is true that when the editors of Calvin's works were assembling his correspondence, a certain Count Henri de Sarrau informed them that he had in his possession a letter addressed by the German reformer to his Swiss counterpart.¹⁷ Admittedly, the letter bore the improbable inscription *amico et patrono*. Now, *patronus* could conceivably mean "advocate" rather than "patron." But the letter remained suspect. From an exact copy it was then discovered (by Herminjard)¹⁸ that the Count's treasured letter was in fact not from Luther, but from Simon Sultzer, pastor and professor of theology at Berne.

Calvin's earliest sentiments about Luther were expressed in a letter he wrote to Martin Bucer (January 12, 1538) during the negotiations which followed the adoption of the Wittenberg Concord (1536). The Concord had achieved reconciliation between the Wittenbergers and the South Germans. The next step was to attempt the inclusion of the Swiss. Calvin was less than enthusiastic. He shared the suspicion of the Swiss theologians that, under the veil of an ambiguous formula, Luther might dream about a transference of

Christ's flesh into ours (or of our flesh into Christ's), or might attribute an infinite body to Christ, or, finally, might insist upon a local presence. A "concord" was to be desired such as all good men could accept in sincerity. Calvin then continues with some remarks on Martin Luther:

If he is able to embrace us with our confession [Calvin means the First Helvetic Confession of 1536] there is nothing that I would more gladly desire. However, he is not the only one in the church of God whom we have to consider. We are thrice unfeeling and barbarous if we take no account of the thousands who are being fiercely reviled under the pretext of the Concord. I do not know what to think of Luther, although I am fully persuaded of his godliness (*pietate*). I sincerely hope that what many are proclaiming, who otherwise have no desire to be unjust to him, is not true: that there is a bit of obstinacy mixed in with his firmness.¹⁹

Calvin suspects Luther of being too fond of winning theological victories, and this, so Calvin believes, will threaten the Concord. Moreover, Calvin is severely critical of Luther's theological position. Luther is guilty, not just of contemptuousness and abuse, but also of ignorance and gross delusion (*crassissima halucinatione*). This is pretty strong language and does not promise well, one would think, for future relations between the two Reformation giants.

On the other hand, a glance at the first edition of Calvin's *Institutes*, already published in 1536, is sufficient to prove that he was deeply indebted to Luther, and this, no doubt, promised better things. Quite apart from the fact, often pointed out, that Calvin modeled the structure of his first edition on Luther's Catechisms, he borrowed freely from the fund of Lutheran ideas, not least on the Lord's Supper. His basic understanding of what a sacrament is unmistakably echoed the classic treatment in Luther's *Babylonian Captivity*. In short, unlike Zwingli, who proclaimed his theological independence, Calvin was a conscious debtor who deliberately appropriated Lutheran insights. It is true that, on this point, Émile Doumergue challenged August Lang, who had argued for Calvin's dependence on Luther in the first edition of the *Institutes*. Doumergue maintained that, in actual fact, Calvin there rejected the three fundamental ideas of Luther's eucharistic teaching in the *Babylonian Captivity*: consubstantiation, the glorified body of Christ, and the identification of the bread and the body.²⁰ But, in my judgment, Lang quite rightly refused to recant,²¹ since the differences pointed out by Doumergue are not incompatible with agreement on the nature of a sacrament. Calvin criticized Luther's teaching on the mode of Christ's presence

in the Eucharist, but he accepted the idea of a sacrament as a sign which confirms the divine promise.²² Hence we must conclude that, despite the wholly negative appearance of Calvin's remarks to Bucer, he was already under Luther's theological influence.

Then, in 1539, news came from Wittenberg that Dr. Martin held Calvin in high esteem. With almost childlike joy the young reformer reported the good news to his friend, Guillaume Farel, and the entire tone of his judgments upon Luther henceforth changed, even if they remained much the same in content. In a letter to Martin Bucer at Strassburg, where Calvin was then residing, Luther had ended with these words: "Farewell. And will you pay my respects (*salutabis . . . reverenter*) to John Sturm and John Calvin. I have read their little books with singular enjoyment."²³ Calvin quoted this commendation of his writing when he addressed a letter to Farel (November 20, 1539),²⁴ and he added: "Just think what I say there about the Eucharist! Consider Luther's generosity (*ingenuitatem*)! It will be easy to decide what reason they have who so obstinately disagree with him." Calvin was also able to add two further testimonies of Luther's goodwill. The first was a statement in a letter from Melanchthon (now lost), according to which "Calvin has found great favor." The second was an incident which Melanchthon had instructed the messenger to deliver orally. Here is how Calvin repeats the communication to Farel:

Certain persons, to irritate Martin, pointed out to him the aversion with which he and his followers were alluded to by me. So he examined the passage in question and felt that he was there, beyond doubt, under attack. After a while, he said: "I certainly hope that he will one day think better of us. Still, it is right for us to be a little tolerant toward such a gifted man."²⁵ We are surely made of stone [Calvin continues] if we are not overcome by such moderation! I, certainly, am overcome, and I have written an apology (*satisfactionem*) for insertion into my preface to the Epistle to the Romans.

Generosity had evoked an answering generosity. Indeed, Calvin's eager testimony to Luther's magnanimous spirit was found embarrassing by later Calvinists. Theodore Beza, who edited Calvin's writings, went through the letter with a censor's quill and crossed out the most compromising phrases.²⁶ As for Calvin's "apology," Melanchthon persuaded him to leave it out of the preface to his Commentary on Romans.²⁷ But he did write it, and sent a copy to Farel for his approval.²⁸ The content of the apology has been thought to shed some light on an interesting question posed by Luther's letter to

Bucer: Which book (or books)²⁹ of Calvin had he “read with singular enjoyment”? Since Luther immediately goes on to make a thrust at Cardinal Sadoleto—“As for Sadoleto, I wish he would believe that God is the creator of men even outside of Italy”—it is natural to suppose that he must have been thinking about Calvin’s *Reply to Sadoleto*, published earlier that same year (1539). In his apology, however, Calvin refers to the new edition of the *Institutes*, which also appeared in 1539, and denies that he there intended to attack the Germans.³⁰ This does not, I think (*pace* Doumergue),³¹ enable us to identify the *Institutes* of 1539 as the “little book” which Luther “read with singular enjoyment.” It seems to me more likely that, in his letter to Bucer, Luther really did have the *Reply to Sadoleto* in mind. But, when confronted with the section on the Eucharist in the new edition of the *Institutes*, he refused to retract his favorable opinion of the author. And Calvin, on his side, was wholly captivated by Luther’s magnanimity. He hastened to explain that he had not really meant to attack the Lutherans at all.

III

In the years immediately following the Wittenberg Concord of 1536 Luther maintained a friendliness toward the Swiss that contrasts strikingly with the bitterness of the Marburg Colloquy of 1529.³² Indeed, even the common image of Luther as the intransigent antagonist of Zwingli in the castle of Philip of Hesse has been much overdone. At that time he was rather more conciliatory than Philip Melanchthon, even though the conference did begin badly when Luther took his piece of chalk and wrote his text on the table. Despite his tempestuous tirades, Luther was on the verge of giving the Swiss the right hand of fellowship, but Melanchthon dissuaded him.³³ In the 1540’s, however, the eucharistic debate flared up once more. Luther’s wrath against the Swiss waxed steadily hotter, until even his friend Melanchthon no longer felt safe in Wittenberg. In August 1543, Luther dashed off an angry letter to the Swiss publisher Froschauer, warning him never again to send him anything written by the Swiss, against whom he intended to pray and teach until the end of his days.³⁴ In 1544 he published his *Short Confession on the Holy Sacrament*, in which his powers of invective carried him to new heights, as in the famous description of his adversaries as possessing an *eingeteuffelt, durch teuffelt, uberteuffelt, lesterlich hertz und Luegenmaul*.³⁵ In January 1546, shortly before his

death, Luther summed up his sentiments in a parody of the first Psalm: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the sacramentarians, nor stands in the way of Zwinglians, nor sits in the seat of the Zurichers."³⁶ How, we must now ask, did Calvin's affection for the German Reformer stand up in the face of these vigorous blasts from Wittenberg? The answer is that it remained steadfast as ever. More surprising, Luther, for his part, seems to have been at least half-willing to exempt Calvin from his tirades against the Swiss.

Luther's letter to Froschauer prompted Calvin to write to Melanchthon (April 21, 1544), asking him to lay a restraining hand on his colleague and friend:

Bullinger has recently complained to me that all the Zurichers have been savagely mangled (*atrociter laceratos*) by Dr. Luther. And he sent a copy of a letter in which I, too, feel a lack of humanity. I beseech you, do all you can to restrain, or rather prevent, Dr. Martin from giving way to his violence against that church. Maybe he has reason to flare up against them, but it is proper to deal more gently with godly and learned men.³⁷

Indeed, had not Luther himself, in 1539, said the same? Later, after Luther's *Short Confession* had appeared, Calvin wrote to Bullinger (November 25, 1544) :

I hear that Luther has at last broken out with savage invective, not so much against you as against us all. . . . Now I hardly dare ask you to remain silent. For it is certainly not just that the innocent should be molested and denied the chance to clear themselves; and it is hard to decide whether it is even good policy. But I desire you to bear in mind, first, Luther's greatness as a man and his outstanding gifts: the stoutheartedness and steadfastness, the skilfulness, and the effectiveness of teaching with which he has labored to destroy the kingdom of antichrist and spread abroad the doctrine of salvation. I often say that even if he should call me a devil, I should still pay him the honor of acknowledging him as an illustrious servant of God, who yet, as he is rich in virtues, so also labors under serious faults. . . . It is our task so to reprehend whatever is bad in him that we make some allowance for those splendid gifts.³⁸

At the very moment when tempers were hottest over the renewed eucharistic debate, Calvin wrote a letter to Luther himself—the only letter ever addressed by one of the two Reformers to the other. The occasion for writing, however, was not furnished by the controversy over the Eucharist, but by persecution of the Protestants in France.³⁹ Fearing for their lives, some of the Protestants had outwardly conformed by attendance at the Roman mass, but remained,

as they said, inwardly devoted to the true religion. They were named "Nicodemites," because, like Nicodemus, they came secretly to the Savior. Calvin challenged the weakness of his countrymen with characteristic vigor in his *Short Treatise Showing What a Faithful Man Should Do, Knowing the Truth of the Gospel, When He Is Among the Papists* (1543).⁴⁰ The French Protestants found his imperatives too uncompromising, and even hinted that Geneva was scarcely the most convincing place from which to command the cross of martyrdom. Calvin penned a reply, *The Apology of John Calvin to the Nicodemite Gentlemen Concerning the Complaint They Have Made That He Is Too Rigorous* (1544).⁴¹ But his countrymen were not convinced, and they felt that a milder verdict could be expected from the Reformers of Wittenberg. They requested Calvin to consult with the Germans by sending a messenger or, if possible, by traveling to Wittenberg himself. Not surprisingly, Calvin felt unable to make the journey in person. To Wittenberg and back by horse was a two-month ride, and Calvin had neither the leisure nor the constitution for such a rugged journey. Besides, he was handicapped by his ignorance of German and, he admitted, was also too deeply in financial debt to go traveling. Finally, the time for conferring with Luther was still remote, since the passion of controversy had not yet subsided.⁴² Instead of a personal visit, then, Calvin translated his two treatises into Latin and sent them by messenger to Wittenberg, together with letters (dated January 21, 1545) to both Luther and Melanchthon.⁴³ He asked, not for agreement, but for a frank appraisal of what he had written.⁴⁴

In his letter to Luther, Calvin makes profuse apologies for claiming the time of an already overburdened man, and requests Luther to read the two treatises, or have them read, and to give his verdict. Luther is addressed as "most respected father," and Calvin is highly deferential throughout, making plain that he shares with the French Protestants a high regard for Luther's authority.

Both because I thought it of the utmost importance for them to be helped by your authority, so that they should not be forever wavering, and also because this was something to be desired by myself as well, I was unwilling to refuse them their request. . . . How I wish I could fly to you there, so that I might enjoy your company for but a few hours! For I should prefer, and it would be much better, to discuss with you in person, not this question only, but others too. But since it is not granted us here on earth, it will shortly be ours, as I hope, in the kingdom of God.⁴⁵

What, then, it will be asked, did Luther make of Calvin's letter? The

answer is that he never received it, and probably never knew that it had been written. Melanchthon wrote back on April 17 that the struggle which he had previously avoided was growing worse, and he expected banishment. "I have not shown your letter to Pericles [i.e., Luther]. For he is inclined to be suspicious, and does not want his replies on such questions as you raise to be passed around."⁴⁶

It would be quite unfair to conclude that Calvin had made a gesture of conciliation to Luther, only to be frustrated by the high-handedness of his supposed friend, Melanchthon. Calvin trusted Melanchthon completely. Knowing the situation at Wittenberg, he had sent both letters to Melanchthon, leaving him to determine, at his own discretion, what to do with the letter addressed to his colleague.⁴⁷ It has indeed been suggested that, in a letter to Pierre Viret, Calvin "seems to play down the importance of the affair,"⁴⁸ as though he wrote to Luther somewhat reluctantly, and solely to pacify his obstinate countrymen. This may well be true.⁴⁹ But it is plain that Calvin had hoped to seize the opportunity to assure Luther directly of his deep respect, and one cannot help wondering how Luther might have responded to the younger man's homage. Perhaps Melanchthon knew best, after all! Certainly, Luther's growing intransigence terrified Melanchthon and severely strained Calvin's admiration. Later in the year (June 28, 1545) Calvin urged Melanchthon to greater openness about his eucharistic convictions and, while commending his prudence and moderation, warned him against the policy of appeasement—this time the appeasement not of Rome but of Luther. Not that Calvin intended to side with the men of Zurich. He told Melanchthon that he found their answer to Luther (the *Orthodox Confession* of 1545) feeble and childish, distinguished more by stubbornness than by learning: they excused Zwingli and reproached Luther with equal injustice, and should either have written differently or else have kept quiet. But he could not overlook that they had been deeply provoked by the thundering Pericles of Wittenberg.

I indeed, who revere him from my heart, am violently ashamed of him. . . . I admit we all owe him much. And I am not reluctant to let him be preeminent with the highest authority, provided he knows how to govern his own self. But in the church we must see that we do not go too far in our deference to men. It would be all over if any one man counted for more than all the rest.⁵⁰

Throughout the renewed crisis, then, Calvin managed to maintain a balance and restraint which prevented him from simply taking the

side of the Swiss against Luther. His attitude rested partly on the conviction that neither side had a monopoly on the truth, partly on his refusal to forget the debt that Protestantism owed to the "illustrious servant of God." Indeed, he suspected that Luther was permitting himself to be led by lesser men, especially Amsdorf.⁵¹ And in this he was more than half right.⁵² Further, there is evidence that Luther, for his part, did not permit the new phase of the eucharistic controversy to alter his own estimate of Calvin. This, however, is another question, and it cannot be allowed to divert us from our theme.⁵³

IV

Other features of Calvin's attitude toward Luther could be documented from his correspondence. He had, for instance, some interesting and discerning comments on Luther as an exegete, suggesting that he was a little too quick in drawing the "fruitful" conclusions from the Scripture text.⁵⁴ But we must now turn from the correspondence to certain of Calvin's theological treatises in which his picture of Luther takes on sharper contours and is set within the frame of something like an historical interpretation of the Reformation. Three treatises written during Luther's lifetime will be considered first: the *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper* (1541), the treatise against Pighius (1543), and the *Humble Exhortation* to Charles V (1543).

The *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper* contains an interesting survey of the eucharistic controversy among the Protestants.⁵⁵ There is good reason to believe that Luther himself examined this section of the treatise and gave it his approval.⁵⁶ It is characteristic of Calvin to insist at the outset on two points. First, one could hardly expect that a proper understanding of this intricate question would have been attained all at once: "We shall not be at all surprised that they [the disputants] did not grasp everything at the outset." But, second, beneath the outward scandal of disagreement he detects a genuine movement toward unity. With a glad expectancy, later to be disappointed, Calvin anticipates a final settlement of the debate. All are now agreed that "we are truly made partakers of the proper substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ." It is just that some are better than others at explaining *how* this happens. Within this movement toward unity both parties erred and refused to hear each other. The case against Luther is that he employed ill-advised simili-

tudes, appeared to teach a local presence, and spoke with too sharp a tongue. But Calvin does not doubt that Luther was right to resist the opposing tendency to reduce the sacrament to a matter of "bare signs." The view of the Zwinglians was entirely too negative and destructive: "For although they did not deny the truth, all the same they did not teach it as clearly as they ought." In any case, our part is not to censure either side, but to recall in thankfulness what we have received from both.

The subject of Calvin's controversy with Pighius is indicated in the full title of his treatise: *A Defence of the Sound and Orthodox Doctrine of the Bondage and Deliverance of the Human Will Against the False Accusations of Albert Pighius*. The first part of the treatise contains a remarkable defense of Luther against many of the charges which are still brought against him in our own day. Whether or not one judges it a merit, Calvin must be acknowledged as a vigorous and skillful polemicist, with a flair for the telling phrase. More important, no doubt, he displays a sensitive appreciation of Luther's thought and personality. He has grasped the meaning of the famous *Anfechtungen* (or "spiritual assaults"), and he recognizes in the admitted extravagance of Luther's style precisely the kind of hero for whom the times cried out.

Calvin refuses to be diverted into a detailed analysis of Luther's moral character.

As for the denunciations with which he [Pighius] slashes Luther's character and morals, it is no part of my present design to rebut them. They do not contribute much of importance to the subject under debate, neither does Luther need any defense of mine. Pighius behaves just like some hungry, ravenous dog which, finding nothing to get its teeth into, vents its spite by yapping.⁵⁷

In any case, the worst that Pighius could find to say against Luther's character was that he must have been a very monster from hell since he was often tormented with oppressive struggles of conscience like the anguish of the damned. Calvin retorts that if only the windbag Pighius had the least inkling of what those struggles meant, he would either have held his peace or become Luther's admirer. It is the common lot of the godly to undergo "fearful tortures of conscience," by which they are made familiar with true humility. A man may even say, in times of unusual testing, that he is not only surrounded and beset by the agonies of death, but swallowed up by hell itself. For among the saints there are certain exceptional men whom God has chosen to be the special objects of His strange judgments. The echoes

of characteristically Lutheran language in this passage are unmistakable, and they testify to Calvin's insight into the religious struggles of the German Reformer. Calvin would not, I think, have wished to include himself among the *ex sanctis praestantissimi*, the exceptional religious personalities in whom the marvelous judgments of God are displayed. But "spiritual assaults" were not foreign to him, and he knew how Luther understood them theologically.

On the problem of the enslaved will Calvin steps forward as Luther's champion, except that he thinks it necessary to tone down some unguarded and exaggerated language. And Calvin insists that, understood within their historical context, even Luther's more extravagant expressions were justified. Pighius deplored, for instance, the fact that Luther was obliged, as a corollary of his views on the bondage of the will, to regard all human works as sins, and that he pressed this theme with gross exaggeration. Calvin replies:

I grant it, but still say that there was good reason which drove him to such exaggeration. He saw the world stupefied by a false and pernicious confidence in works, as if by a fatal lethargy. What was needed to awaken it was not voice and words, but the trumpet-blast, thunder, and lightning.⁵⁸

On the matter of "necessity" in providence and predestination Calvin refuses to be embarrassed by the accusation that there were inconsistencies in Protestant theology, not only between one theologian and another, but even within the writings of a single theologian. There is no reason why all should be expected to use precisely the same mode of expression, nor any reason why an author should be forbidden to improve what he has once written. The expression of the truth is always perfectible. Melanchthon, for example, has adapted to a more popular style much that Luther wrote in the scholastic mode (*scholastico dicendi genere*). And for himself, Calvin's claim is this:

That which is most important in this question, and for the sake of which everything else is said, we defend today just as it was declared by Luther and others at the beginning; and even in what I have declared less necessary to faith my own concern has been to avoid offense by softening the mode of expression.⁵⁹

In his treatise against Pighius Calvin sums up his understanding of Luther in a single sentence: "We regard him as a remarkable apostle of Christ, through whose work and ministry, most of all, the purity of the gospel has been restored in our time."⁶⁰ The same picture of Luther reappears in the appeal to Charles V, written in the

same year and laid before the Diet of Speier in 1544. The appeal was published "in the name of all who desire Christ to reign," under the long-winded title, *A Humble Exhortation to the Invincible Emperor, Charles V, and the Most Illustrious Princes and Other Orders Now Assembled at the Diet of Speier That They Should Choose Seriously to Undertake the Task of Restoring the Church.* (From the object of the appeal the treatise is commonly and more manageably titled *The Necessity for Reforming the Church.*) Here Calvin speaks of Luther as the man whom God raised up at the beginning, along with others, to hold a torch over the path to salvation.⁶¹ Before Luther became known, all the world was bewitched by irreligious opinions about the merit of works.⁶² But when the truth of God had been choked by thick clouds of darkness, and when religion had been corrupted by godless superstitions, Luther appeared, and others after him, who took counsel together to purge religion from a host of defilements. "In this course," Calvin adds, "we still continue today."⁶³ He is particularly anxious to present his man as the reluctant reformer driven, against his intention, from protest to revolt. Luther pleaded with the pope to heal the maladies of the church. The plea fell on deaf ears.⁶⁴

When Luther first appeared, he pointed gently to but a few abuses which were too gross to be endured any longer. So unassuming was he that he did not venture to correct them himself, but rather made it known that he longed to see them corrected. It was the opposing party that promptly sounded the call to arms. As the contention flared up, our enemies judged it the best and shortest way to suppress the truth with force and brutality. . . . And now we have to listen to the same reproach which the godless Ahab once brought against Elijah, that he was a troubler of Israel (I Kings 18:17). But the holy prophet absolved us with his reply: "It is not I," he says, "but you and your father's house [that trouble Israel], for you have forsaken the Lord and gone after Baalim."⁶⁵

We have it on reliable authority that Luther read the *Humble Exhortation* and gave it his glowing commendation.⁶⁶ And well he might! Seldom has a more sympathetic and loyal picture of the Reformer been given outside the limits of his own communion. But one thing stands out clearly in the three treatises of the years 1541 and 1543: for all his devotion to Luther, Calvin never appeals to his ideas as though they were final or definitive. Luther, for Calvin, was not an oracle, but a pathfinder—a pioneer, in whose footsteps we follow and whose trail has to be pushed on further. We hurry on, still today, in the path he opened up.⁶⁷ The Reformation (if we may so express Calvin's meaning) is open-ended: it had its beginning in the person

of that "remarkable apostle of Christ," but it did not end with him. It is this conviction of Calvin's that was sharpened after Luther's death, when a further round of eucharistic debates was initiated.

V

The eucharistic controversies of the 1550's were evoked, in part, by the adoption of the *Zurich Consensus* (1549) as the bond of union between French- and German-speaking Protestants of Switzerland.⁶⁸ In the eyes of the strict Lutherans the *Consensus* showed Calvin in his true colors: all along, he had been one of the "sacramentarians." During the bitter quarrels which followed, Calvin made no attempt to revise his estimate of Luther, but he had to defend it openly on two fronts: against the Swiss, who detested the memory of Luther, and against the ultra-Lutherans, who (in Calvin's opinion) idolized him. And it must be admitted that Calvin did not have much success with either. For the one group, the name of Luther could only evoke bitter recollections of the past; while in the eyes of the other group a nimbus had settled over the deceased Reformer's shoulders.

Calvin's battle may be read in his correspondence during the period. Against Luther's detractors he insisted that Luther could not but give his blessing to the new agreement among the Swiss on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Calvin honestly believed that he had discovered the fundamental point of Luther's contention for the Real Presence, that between the two of them there had never been any disagreement on this point, and that since the point was now unambiguously affirmed by the Swiss theologians Luther, were he alive, could not withhold his approval.

If Luther, that distinguished servant of God and faithful doctor of the church, were alive today, he would not be so harsh and unyielding as not willingly to allow this confession: that what the sacraments figure is truly offered to us (*vere praestari*), and that therefore in the sacred Supper we become participants in the Body and Blood of Christ. For how often did he declare that he was contending for no other cause than to establish that the Lord does not mock us with empty signs, but accomplishes inwardly what He sets before our eyes, and that the effect is therefore conjoined with the signs?⁶⁹

But many of the Swiss theologians were not impressed with Calvin's thoughts on what Luther would doubtless do, were he alive. They found it astonishing that he should persist in making himself

Luther's champion.⁷⁰ With all the tact they could muster, the pastors of Zurich put it down to Calvin's ignorance of German.

Possibly you do not know, dear brother, how crassly and barbarously Doctor Luther thought and wrote concerning this spiritual feast. You have not been able to read or understand his books, since he wrote the greater part of this sort in German. . . . So that you may not be ignorant, therefore, of what it had been especially useful to know in this affair, we will rehearse a few particular passages of his. We give the substance faithfully, but specify the page, so that, if you like, you can invite an interpreter skilled in the German language to translate for you word for word. And if you do not possess the books, we have them and shall be happy to lend them to you.⁷¹

As for Calvin's view that Luther would gladly give his hand to those who conceded the efficacious character of the sacramental signs, the men of Zurich retort: "Dear Calvin, he would *not* offer us his hand—that right hand which, when living, he did not wish to offer to Zwingli and Oecolampadius, when they were living, though they made all these same concessions and professions."⁷²

As far as the other party was concerned—those who refused to move beyond the details of Luther's own eucharistic teaching—Calvin consistently asserted, and not very politely, that there is a difference between a disciple and an ape.⁷³ This, admittedly, was not a choice of language that was apt to commend his point. Still, the point was worth making, and Calvin could, on occasion, deliver it more courteously, though no less forcefully. Hence to one correspondent he wrote, in reply to the charge that he did not always subscribe to the interpretations of Luther:

But if now it will not be permitted to each exegete to make public what he thinks about a particular passage of Scripture, to what kind of servitude are we reduced? Indeed, if I was not permitted at any point to depart from the opinion of Luther, it was utterly ridiculous of me to undertake the work of exegesis (*munus interpretandi*).⁷⁴

What Calvin feared was that some of Luther's adherents would make their master's opinions the touchstone of dogmatic truth, thereby repudiating, in effect, Luther's own fundamental principle that the word of God always stands above the doctrines of men.⁷⁵

Once again, the evidence of the correspondence may be filled out by examining certain of Calvin's theological treatises: in particular, the treatise *On Scandals* (1550), the *Second Defense Against Westphal* (1556), and the ironical work against Gabriel (1561).

Calvin has occasion more than once to speak of Luther in his work *On the Scandals by Which Many Today Are Deterred, and Some*

Even Alienated, from the Pure Doctrine of the Gospel. For, as he himself remarks, “How many fables have Luther’s enemies repeated about him, both in addresses and in published books, for a full five and twenty years!”⁷⁶ Among other things, the adversaries of the Protestants alleged that the Reformation was a kind of Trojan war—fought, that is, for the sake of women. Luther, they explained, was spurred on by the lust of the flesh and procured for himself the liberty to marry. It must be admitted that Calvin replies very much in kind. “What could be more ridiculous,” he inquires, “than for those who cannot maintain chastity of life to flee from the papacy?”⁷⁷ But this, of course, is mere skirmishing beyond the real battlelines.

Of chief interest in the work *On Scandals* is what Calvin has to say on the scandal of a divided church.⁷⁸ For even “the most prominent teachers of the reborn gospel (*primarios renascentis evangelii doctores*)” are divided on matters of doctrine. Especially unhappy is the contention over the sacraments. Calvin finds it odd that the Protestant differences should somehow appear more scandalous than the fierce theological quarrels among the Roman schools. Further, he reminds the scandalized that among the faithful servants of God there have always been sharp disagreements, such as set Paul against Barnabas and Peter against Paul. But the controversy of Luther and his Protestant opponents, so he argues, moved within the lines of fundamental agreement on the nature of the gospel. “There was a remarkable consensus among them on all that is essential to godliness (*in tota pietatis summa*).” They agreed, for instance, that the whole of salvation resides in the grace of Christ, and they overthrew all confidence in works. “They extolled magnificently the excellency of Christ (*Christi virtutem*), which had lain prostrate or hidden from sight.” Only on the sacraments was there dissension. And even on this question Calvin’s considered opinion is that only polemical passion and mistrust delayed reconciliation. The miracle is that Luther and others who labored in his day for the restoration of sound doctrine were able slowly to emerge from the darkness of ignorance and error. True, there are those who profess themselves offended because Luther and his contemporaries did not see everything in a flash, and they refuse to continue in the course already begun. But Calvin says of them:

They are behaving just like the man who blames us because at the first break of dawn (*primo aurorae exortu*) we do not yet discern the midday sun. . . . Surely, those who talk like this are unwilling to

allow progress to the servants of God or are distressed that the kingdom of Christ should move on to something better.⁷⁹

If one may so put it, Calvin here represents Luther, not John Wycliffe, as the "Morning Star of the Reformation." And it is plainly a continuing reformation that he has in mind—reformation as defined by "progress" (*profectus*) and "movement" (*promoveri*). Yet it is still movement from a fixed point, at which stands the extraordinary figure of Martin Luther, God's chosen pioneer.

Luther's name was invoked frequently in the debate between Calvin and Westphal, especially in Calvin's *Second Defence of the Godly and Orthodox Faith Concerning the Sacraments Against the False Accusations of Joachim Westphal*. That Westphal, the ultra-Lutheran, appealed to Luther's memory, is natural enough.⁸⁰ But it is precisely Westphal's right to claim Luther as spiritual father that Calvin contests. Calvin recalls the warmth of his own friendship with the first generation of Lutheran Reformers. From the very beginning, when he was just emerging from the darkness of the papacy, he had been turned from Zwingli and Oecolampadius by his reading of Luther. Later, he was kindly received by all Luther's keenest advocates. And Luther's own judgment of him, after examining Calvin's writings, can easily be shown through reliable witnesses, including Melanchthon.⁸¹ Calvin's respect for Luther remains unchanged. It is true that the German reformer was sometimes carried away by his violent disposition, but the flame was sparked by mischief-makers.⁸² And it is surely pathetic that some of Luther's followers should choose to mimic only his personal shortcomings. "Ah, Luther! How few imitators of your excellence have you left behind you—and how many apes of your holy belligerence!"⁸³ As for himself, Calvin rejects the charge that his *Commentary on Genesis* was crammed with harsh judgments on Luther, though he leaves us in no doubt that he found more to disapprove in Luther's own commentary than he chose to mention. "More than a hundred times I refrain, out of respect, from mentioning his name." But wherever he does name Luther, the "illustrious servant of Christ" is treated with all due honor.⁸⁴

The point is, then, that although Calvin both regretted Luther's disposition and frankly dissented from some of his expressions,⁸⁵ he considered this the legitimate right of an avowed disciple; for the disciple, unlike the epigone, is one who *continues* in the course begun by his master. Calvin insists, as usual, that the *terminus a quo* for a genuine "Lutheran," as far as the Eucharist is concerned, is the

efficacious character of sacramental signs. It is here that we have to begin, and not with those unfortunate exaggerations by which Luther himself advanced beyond the essential matter (*ultra... progressum esse*).⁸⁶ Dogmatic development, so it appears, is not always for the better (*in melius*, as Calvin wrote in the work *On Scandals*). Indeed, Calvin elsewhere speaks of certain of Luther's opinions as reactionary—a failure to free himself from medievalism, or perhaps a temporary accommodation to the times.⁸⁷ Therefore, not progress, but regress! The disciple's duty is to move on. Westphal, however, is like "the man who enters upon the right path, but, as soon as the one who showed him the path turns back, obstinately digs his heels into the one spot and refuses to move on further (*ultra progredi*)."⁸⁸

The last of our sources for Calvin's views on Luther is his *Congratulation to the Venerable Presbyter Gabriel of Saconay, Precentor of the Church of Lyons, on the Beautiful and Elegant Preface Which He Wrote to the Book by the English King*. Gabriel had reissued Henry VIII's famous polemic against Luther and had furnished it with a preface. For relaxation, Calvin wrote his ironical response and published it anonymously, referring to himself throughout in the third person. Here we find once more judgments which are already familiar from the earlier sources. First, Luther was lacking in moderation. It is no wonder that he was shocked by Carlstadt's foolish invention, but he should have listened calmly to men like Oecolampadius. In fact, he overstepped the limits and spoke in anger.⁸⁹ Second, it is preposterous to identify as "the last Elijah" either Luther or anyone else. (Gabriel had hinted that Calvin only begrudged the title to Luther because he fancied it for himself.)⁹⁰ Third, Calvin again presents the idea of a reformation-in-progress. Only now the main thought is, not that the appearance of Luther was one event among others in a continuing movement, but rather that Luther's own thought was only gradually unfolded. Indeed, we can assume that, were he alive today, he would continue to make progress in the truth. A key factor in the shaping of Luther's mind was the negative role played by his critics—a thought which Calvin had already expressed in his work against Pighius.⁹¹ The positions occupied by his critics forced Luther to more radical offensives against Rome. If, then, Luther once said that the kernel of Christianity is in the papacy, Calvin assures Gabriel that, were the Reformer still alive, he would take that saying back. For what would prevent him from making good progress (*in melius proficere*) in the space of thirty-three years?⁹² It is quite true that Luther shifted his position on such

matters as the papacy, purgatory, invocation of the saints, the sacrifice of the mass, celibacy, and confession.

But what, I beg you, was Luther to do at a time when but a faint spark of light had shone upon him? He disclosed, with sincerity, what he knew—that is, little more than nothing. . . . The wonder is that you do not charge him with failure to speak even before he emerged from his mother's womb.⁹³

The import of these three treatises from the years 1550, 1556, and 1561 is transparently clear: Calvin wishes to claim for his reformation a continuity with the reformation of Martin Luther. But the claim of continuity is a claim of legitimate development, not of formal identity. In his own estimate, he does not merely transmit the heritage of Luther, but neither does he set his own reformation in opposition to Luther's.⁹⁴ In this sense, Calvin was, in the words of Peter Meinhold, "the greatest and indeed the only 'disciple' that Luther had."⁹⁵ For only Calvin had both the depth of understanding and the creative talents to fashion out of Luther's heritage something which bore the imprint of his own genius. This, at least, was how Calvin himself thought of his relationship to Luther. But it seems less lacking in modesty to have it said by someone other than Calvin.

VI

That Calvin's attitude toward Luther, as we have now described it, raises a whole host of historical and theological problems, hardly needs to be asserted. I have sought only to carry out the first-stage historical task of marshaling such evidence as seems most relevant to our limited theme: What did Calvin actually *say* about Martin Luther? But the further question immediately suggests itself: Was Calvin right? Was he right in the way he understood his relationship to Luther? Of course, this question is also in part historical. But only in part. It also touches on points where theological commitments are at stake. And even the historical aspects of the question are too complex to be readily solved. What Calvin *said* about Luther, including what he *said* about Luther's theology, is a manageable historical problem which has been adequately handled more than once. But the existing literature is far less satisfactory, in my judgment, where it seeks to compare Luther and Calvin from a neutral standpoint beyond their judgments upon each other. It does not seem to me that historical scholarship has yet sorted out the elements of con-

tinuity and discontinuity between the two major reformers. The attempt to enumerate their theological differences, even though it has often been carried out with sensitivity and insight,⁹⁶ leaves much to be desired. The contrasts are too quickly drawn and made to rest upon an insufficiently comprehensive examination of the sources, which are admittedly formidable in bulk for either reformer alone. Divergent lines of thought are taken to represent a difference between Luther and Calvin, when a more thorough investigation would show that the divergence lies on both sides—that it exemplifies, in fact, the complexity of a theological outlook which the two reformers had in common. For example, both speak of faith as at once knowledge and trust, and both regard Scripture as at once inspired words and witness to the Living Word, Jesus Christ. And yet, by means of "diagonal" comparisons which link the Reformers' unlike utterances instead of pairing the resemblances, it can be alleged that Calvin's idea of faith was more intellectual than Luther's and his understanding of Scripture more inclined toward literalism. By an equally judicious selection of sources the exact opposite could be "proved."⁹⁷ Much more historical research is needed to determine whether seeming differences are really matters of emphasis or even wholly illusory. Only then can we decide how far Calvin was in fact what he claimed to be, a genuine disciple of Luther. However, setting aside this problem for the moment, we content ourselves with stressing two conclusions of our present theme, which has been concerned only with Calvin's explicit judgments on Martin Luther. In each of these conclusions our interest is in the shape or form of Calvin's thinking rather than in its specific content. We do not ask whether his reading of Luther and the Reformation was correct in detail, but what kind of a reading it was.

In the first place, whether materially justified or not, Calvin's estimate of Luther was historical, not dogmatic, in form. He viewed Luther and the Reformation from a progressive, not an absolutist, perspective. Luther's story was understood by Calvin as a gradual unfolding of the gospel in its various historical relationships, a process in which Luther's opponents played a key role. Calvin rejected not only every effort to elevate Luther's teaching to the status of finished dogma but also any temptation to remove the person of Luther beyond the categories of history—to make him, so to say, an apocalyptic rather than a prophetic figure. Though divinely called, the Reformer was not himself a supernatural person. Calvin did not even object to Luther's being called by the name of Elijah. What he

repudiated was the eschatological language which identified him as "the Last Elijah."⁹⁸

It is hardly too much to claim, with Ernst Walter Zeeden,⁹⁹ that Calvin anticipated the Pietist-Enlightenment idea of the historical character (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of Luther and the Reformation. This is, I think, particularly clear in the treatise against Pighius, where we have found Calvin arguing that theological truth is not formulated once and for all. The *actus tradendi* is also *actus formandi*: "If Pighius does not know it," he wrote, "I want to make this plain to him: our constant effort, day and night, is also to *fashion*, in the manner we think will be best, whatever is faithfully *handed on* by us."¹⁰⁰ Of course, Calvin did not intend to allow for changing the content of the faith. He meant precisely that in the theological task *formare* is always *fideliter tradere*, even though the handing on cannot leave the mode of expression unchanged. Hence he went on to state in these words Melanchthon's intention in preparing the Augsburg Confession: "He had no other wish than to abide by that doctrine which alone is proper to the church and necessary for saving knowledge."¹⁰¹

Undoubtedly such an interpretation of the theological task is extremely hard to implement, precisely because it so acutely poses the problem of continuity. It does not furnish exact norms so much as it announces good intentions. Calvin was obliged to argue, for instance, that one could disentangle Luther's essential concern in the eucharistic debates from certain accidental crudities of expression. He never denied that Luther and he disagreed on the idea of an oral manducation (*de substanciali manducazione*). But he believed that he had discovered—and, indeed, expressed in Luther's own words—the reason why the German reformer pressed his eucharistic doctrine with such passion.¹⁰² Calvin had located, so he thought, the essential concern which stood above the theological differences and was therefore capable of furnishing the basis of unity-in-diversity. But how do we judge what is essential and what is accidental? This is the difficulty in all attempts to "continue the Reformation." The modern liberal Protestant may turn on Luther and Calvin alike with the judgment that they both stood aside from the real line of progress opened up by Servetus and Socinus. "In the name of progress in Biblical theology," it has been said, "modern Protestantism will proceed to a critical revision of dogma, which the Reformers did not undertake."¹⁰³ Here Calvin's own principle of development is, in effect, directed against Calvin himself. But in a sense this serves only

to validate Calvin's own fundamental point that an earlier theological achievement, however magnificent, cannot relieve the church of its duties of exegesis and dogmatics. Moreover, one can also recognize from Calvin's arguments against Westphal that he would by no means concede the subjectivity of his quest for Luther's essential concern. For if he was wrong about Luther, and if, as Westphal argued, Luther condemned indifferently all who denied his understanding of the Real Presence, how could the unquestionable sympathy between the two reformers be explained? This is the question that Calvin threw back at Westphal.¹⁰⁴

In the second place, Calvin's estimate of Luther points to a pluralistic reading of Reformation history, according to which no one party or individual had full possession of the truth. This has to be added to the former conclusion for an obvious reason. It would be easy to assume that Calvin's sole purpose in viewing Luther's work as imperfect was to represent his own work as perfect—or, at least, as very much better. There is, I think, something in this. Calvin does seem, on occasion, to fall into the common illusion of the “progressivist,” who may picture the movement of history coming to a halt in his own system. And it cannot be denied that Calvin all too frequently stood in need of the same wisdom that he displayed in his sentiments about Luther. Calvin, as we all know, could be dogmatic, overbearing, annoyingly self-confident, and acrimonious in criticism. He possessed a keen theological intellect and was ruthless in exposing the confusions of less gifted rivals. Moreover, he was stubbornly certain that he spoke as God's mouthpiece, although, as he engagingly assures us, he did not make up his mind on a certain matter until he had considered it more than three times.¹⁰⁵ From all of which it certainly seems as though Calvin did not really believe in an *ecclesia reformans*, but merely dated the finished Reformation to coincide with his own life and work, so that a fixed norm appears, after all, to be the supposed outcome of the sixteenth-century struggle within the Western church. It must be replied, however, that this appearance is not the whole picture.

If Calvin thought of himself as God's mouthpiece, he thought of Luther in the same way, and this did not prevent him from regarding Luther as fallible.¹⁰⁶ Further, it could be demonstrated from a host of citations that Calvin really did believe in that *gemeinsames Hören*, that hearing of the word along with others, which has been missed in the writings of Luther.¹⁰⁷ In the *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper* his claim is that the truth lay in the dialogue, not on either

side of it, and his conclusion is notably undogmatic.¹⁰⁸ In the negotiations that led to the *Zurich Consensus* Calvin engaged in a remarkably frank correspondence with Heinrich Bullinger, in which each really listened to the criticisms of the other.¹⁰⁹ Further, it could be pointed out that Calvin disapproved on principle of the drafting of confessions of faith by a single hand, citing the legendary origin of the Apostles' Creed in his support.¹¹⁰ Finally, he longed to see the assembling of an international congress of theologians which might produce a unified evangelical witness.¹¹¹ In all these ways Calvin revealed his consciousness of standing along with others under the word of God. But perhaps the most striking token of his "pluralistic" attitude toward the Reformation and its theology is the interesting phenomenon of the Genevan "congregations," at which the Reformed pastors from the surrounding territory, together with a handful of devout lay people, gathered together to discuss some prearranged passage of Scripture. Calvin believed firmly that this was the proper manner to carry out the interpretation of Scripture. "For as long as there is no mutual exchange, each can teach what he likes. Solitude provides too much liberty."¹¹² In the last year of his life, when he was too ill to teach or preach, Calvin still—against the counsel of his anxious friends—made his painful way to the Friday morning congregation whenever he could, and there "added that which God had given him to say upon the text."¹¹³ Practice here coincides perfectly with the principles which Calvin prefaced to his *Commentary on Romans* and which have indeed sometimes been identified with the "apology" that he promised to the Lutherans in 1539:

God has never seen fit to bestow such favor on his servants that each individually should be endowed with full and perfect knowledge on every point. No doubt, his design was to keep us both humble and eager for brotherly communication. In this life, then, we should not hope for what otherwise would be most desirable, that there should be continual agreement among us in understanding passages of Scripture. We must therefore take care that, if we depart from the opinions of those who went before us, we do not do so because excited by the itch after novelty, nor driven by fondness for deriding others, nor goaded by animosity, nor tickled by ambition, but only because compelled by pure necessity and with no other aim than to be of service.¹¹⁴

In so writing Calvin was, I dare to think, loyal to the intention of Luther himself, for whom the word of God is not given up to the

control of any man or any institution, but continually creates for itself a fellowship of hearers and doers.

N O T E S

¹ A. Zahn, "Calvins Urtheile über Luther. Ein Beitrag zur Lutherfeier aus der reformirten Kirche Deutschlands," *Theologische Studien aus Württemberg*, IV (ed. Theodor Hermann and Paul Zeller, Ludwigsburg: Ad. Neubert'sche Buchhandlung, 1883), 183-211; August Lang, "Luther und Calvin," *Deutsch-evangelische Blätter*, XXI, 5 (1896), 319-32; Ernst Walter Zeeden, "Das Bild Martin Luthers in den Briefen Calvins," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, XLIX, 1/2 (1958), 177-95; Erwin Mülhaupt, "Luther und Calvin. Eine Jubiläumsbetrachtung," *Luther. Mitteilungen der Luthergesellschaft*, 1959, no. 3, pp. 97-113; Peter Meinhold, "Calvin und Luther," *Lutherische Monatshefte*, 1964, no. 3, pp. 264-69. Cf. also Bernhard Lohse, "Calvin als Reformator," *Luther. Zeitschrift der Luthergesellschaft*, XXXV, 3 (1964) 102-17.

² See, in particular: Auguste Lemaitre, "Calvin et Luther," *Les Cahiers de 'joi et vérité'*, 38 (Série 10, no. 2). [Geneva, 1959] pp. 3-24; A. Eekhof, "Hoe heeft Calvijn over Luther gedacht?" *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, N.S. XIV (1918), 273-96.

³ Of particular note is the full discussion in the magisterial work of Émile Doumergue, *Jean Calvin. Les hommes et les choses de son temps*, II (Lausanne: Georges Bridel, 1902), 562-87.

⁴ Allan L. Farris, "Calvin's Letter to Luther," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, X, 2 (1964) 124-131, reproduces an old translation of Calvin's letter and adds some historical notes, but does not attempt a general discussion of the relations between the two reformers. Alexander Barclay, in *The Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper: a Study in the Eucharistic Teaching of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin* (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie, 1927), compares the Reformers on this limited theme only. I have not been able to find any previous study in English which is devoted directly to Calvin's opinions on Martin Luther.

⁵ The index to Vols. 23-55 of *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia [Corpus Reformatorum]*, (ed. G. Baum *et al.*, Brunswick and Berlin, 1863-1900) lists ten references to Luther in Calvin's exegetical works, four of which occur in the *Commentary on Genesis*. This edition of Calvin will henceforth be abbreviated as "CO."

⁶ CO, vols. 10, Part II, to 20. Reference will also be made to Aimé-Louis Herminjard, *Correspondance des réformateurs dans les pays de langue française*, 9 vols. (Geneva 1878-97), whose editorial notes are invaluable.

⁷ CO, vols. 5-9. Some of the treatises will also be found in *Ioannis Calvini opera selecta*, vols. I and II (ed. P. Barth *et. al.*, Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1926 and 1952), but I give references only to CO.

⁸ A great number of Calvin's letters have been translated: *Letters of John Calvin Compiled and Edited by Jules Bonnet*, trans. David Constable and Marcus Robert Gilchrist, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, n.d. [ca 1858]). But this collection is by no means complete and does not contain all the letters which will be discussed in the present essay. A collection of the theological treatises in English has recently been reprinted: *Calvin's Tracts and Treatises*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958). It includes only three of the six treatises which are important for our theme. Mention

may also be made of J. K. S. Reid, ed., *Calvin: Theological Treatises* (Library of Christian Classics, vol. XXII; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), which contains in English translation the *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper* and *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, two of the treatises to which reference will be made. For simplicity of reference, I cite throughout only *CO*, and even where older translations are in existence I have preferred to make my own. All translations of the secondary literature are also mine.

⁹ Cf. Lemaître, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4; Mühlaupt, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-99. Mühlaupt also contrasts Luther the scholastic with Calvin the humanist and even describes Calvin as an industrious *Amateurtheologe*.

¹⁰ See the essays by Lemaître, Lohse, and Meinhold, referred to above.

¹¹ So Eekhof, Lang, Zahn, and Zeeden. Of course, some of the articles mentioned (e.g., the one by Mühlaupt) display an interest in all three divisions of the theme.

¹² Quoted (in the German) by Eekhof, *op. cit.*, pp. 295-96, from *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* (1917), p. 225.

¹³ *CO* 32, 460-61.

¹⁴ *CO* 9, 19, 91; 15, 336; 16, 263, 430; 17, 139. But he considered it inferior to the French *Confession de foi*, as his correspondence with the Reformed participants in the Colloquy of Poissy (1561) demonstrates: *CO* 18, 683-84 (to Beza), 733 (to Coligny).

¹⁵ *CO* 5, 458-460; 9, 51; 10, II, 346; 11, 24, 438.

¹⁶ *CO* 18, 73 (no. 3189). Cf. *CO* 16, 553 (no. 2674), where Calvin reports that he had passed on to a friend a book lent by Andreae, *quia linguae germanicae sum ignarus*.

¹⁷ *CO* 10, II, xliv.

¹⁸ Herminjard, *op. cit.*, VII, 284-86.

¹⁹ *CO* 10, II, 138-39 (no. 87). Cf. Herminjard, *op. cit.*, IV, 432, n. 11. See also *CO* 10, II, 277 (to Farel: October, 1538), 340-41 (to Farel: April, 1539).

²⁰ Doumergue, *op. cit.*, pp. 569-70.

²¹ Lang's article, "Luther und Calvin," was reprinted in his *Reformation und Gegenwart; Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Detmold: Meyer, 1918), pp. 72-87, after publication of Doumergue's work, to which a brief allusion is made.

²² "Principio animadvertere convenit, quid sit sacramentum. Est autem signum externum . . . ut promissionem ipsam firmet atque obsignet . . ." (*CO* 1, 102).

²³ The relevant part of his letter, dated October 14, 1539, is given in *CO* 10, II, 402 (no. 190).

²⁴ *CO* 10, II, 432 (no. 197).

²⁵ "Sed aequum est a bono ingenio nos aliquid ferre" (*ibid.*). Perhaps Luther meant "a man of good character," but in other judgments it was usually Calvin's intellectual ability which seems to have impressed him. See below. The Eng. trans. of Calvin's letter by Constable gives a quite different rendering: "It is well that he should even now have a proof of our good feeling toward him" (*op. cit.*, I, 143). This translation appears, without any explanation, in a footnote in *CO*, 10, II, 432 (n. 18).

²⁶ Specifically, the words "Just think . . . disagree with him" and "We are surely . . . to the Romans." See Herminjard, *op. cit.*, VI, 131, nn. 49, 53.

²⁷ Calvin wrote to Farel on January 10, 1540: "Luther has very kindly inquired after me from Bucer. Philip judged that I should dispense with my apology (*excusatione illa mea . . . supersedendum*)." *Herminjard, op.*

cit., VI, 165. But why dispense with it? Because it was thought unnecessary, or because it might have the opposite effect to that intended?

²⁸ Herminjard reproduces the text: *op. cit.*, VI, 132-37. See also his important notes on pp. 131-32, which correct the editors of *CO* at certain points. Misled by an annotation of Farel's on the back of his copy of the *excusatio*, the editors supposed that there were two apologies, one intended for the *Commentary on Romans*, the other for the *Institutes*. The epistle dedicatory does in fact contain an interesting statement on the diversity of theological opinion (see below), but this cannot be identified with the apology. A few fragments of the apology were incorporated into the *Institutio* of 1543.

²⁹ Luther's wording (*quorum libellos*) leaves it open whether he read more than one book by Calvin. He *must* have read at least one each by Calvin and Sturm. He *may* have read more.

³⁰ Herminjard, *op. cit.*, VI, 132-37.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 571-72, n. 6. It should be added here that we have two further testimonies to Luther's approval of the *Reply to Sadolet*: a letter from Marcus Crodel, a schoolmaster from Torgau, addressed to Calvin on March 6, 1545; *CO* 12, 40 (no. 619); and an incident reported by Chrostoph Pezel in his *Ausführliche, wahrhafte und beständige Erzählung* and cited by Doumergue himself (*op. cit.*, 572). According to Pezel, Luther was rereading the *Reply* as he travelled to visit the sick Melanchthon at Weimar (1540). To his travel-companion Cruciger he expressed his admiration for the work and predicted that Calvin would complete what he himself had begun against the antichrist. In his *Reply to Sadolet* Calvin expressly rejects (1) a local presence of Christ's body in the eucharistic bread and (2) the ubiquity of Christ's human nature (*CO* 5, 399-400).

³² See, for instance, *WA Br* 8, 149-53 (no. 3191) and 241-42 (no. 3240).

³³ For Luther's conduct at Marburg see the letter of Bucer to Ambrose Blarer (October 18, 1529) quoted by Walther Köhler, *Das Marburger Religionsgespräch 1529. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion* (Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte, no. 148, Leipzig, 1929), pp. 139-40.

³⁴ *WA Br* 10, 387 (no. 3908).

³⁵ *WA* 54, 147, 33.

³⁶ *WA Br* 11, 264 (no. 4188).

³⁷ *CO* 11, 698 (no. 544).

³⁸ *CO* 11, 774-75 (no. 586).

³⁹ Cf. the brief account in Beza's life of Calvin: *CO* 21, 138. The circumstances are more fully described in Calvin's letter to Melanchthon of January 21, 1545: *CO* 12, 9-12 (no. 606).

⁴⁰ *CO* 537-88.

⁴¹ *CO* 6, 589-614.

⁴² Calvin's excuses will be found in a letter, written January 1545 to an unnamed friend, possibly one of his countrymen: *CO* 12, 25-26 (no. 610).

⁴³ Both of these, in their Latin version, were subsequently published together under the title *De vitandis superstitionibus*, with added comments from other leading reformers. See *CO* 6, 617-44.

⁴⁴ See the letter to Melanchthon: *CO* 12, 10 (no. 606).

⁴⁵ *CO* 12, 8 (no. 605).

⁴⁶ *CO* 12, 61 (no. 632). Luther was being nicknamed "Pericles" at this time because the ancient Athenian had been likened to Zeus, the thrower of thunderbolts.

⁴⁷ *CO* 12, 10 (no. 606).

⁴⁸ So Farris, *op. cit.*, p. 128, n. 23.

⁴⁹ See the letter to Viret (February 2, 1545) : *CO* 12, 26-27 (no. 611).

⁵⁰ *CO* 12, 99 (no. 657).

⁵¹ See, e.g., the letter to Bullinger of November 25, 1544: *CO* 11, 774 (no. 586).

⁵² Cf. Melanchthon's letter to Bucer (August 28, 1544) : Herminjard, *op. cit.*, IX, 373, n. 16).

⁵³ "Tu unus semper probatus Lutherο," Farel wrote to Calvin on October 15, 1555 (*CO* 15, 823). The most interesting testimony to Luther's continuing goodwill is an anecdote related by both Christoph Pezel and Rudolph Hospinian. Moritz Goltzsch, a Wittenberg bookseller, brought back the Latin translation of Calvin's *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper* from the Frankfurt Fair (1545) and presented a copy to Luther, who read the closing section with particular care and announced that if Zwingli and Oecolampadius had spoken like Calvin there would have been no need for a long dispute. I do not currently have access to either of the two sources, but Pezel's account (the longer of the two) is given in full by Doumergue in French translation: *op. cit.*, pp. 572-73. Mülhaupt (*op. cit.*, p. 103) suspects this story of being a mere embellishment of the incident Calvin reported to Farel in his letter of November 20, 1539, where, as we have seen, the writing in question is not identified. But this is mere guesswork, and the story may well be authentic. Pezel relates it with attention to details and also names the witness (one of Luther's table-companions) from whom the incident is derived. On the other hand, it is quite plain from two passages in the *Table Talk* that Luther's attitude toward Calvin in the closing years of his life was a mixture of respect and suspicion: *WA TR* 5, 51 (no. 5303) and 461 (no. 6050).

⁵⁴ To Viret, May, 1540: *CO* 11, 36 (no. 217).

⁵⁵ *CO* 5, 457-60.

⁵⁶ See *supra*, n. 53.

⁵⁷ *CO* 6, 245.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 251. Taken in isolation, this passage might seem to imply that differences of expression affect only nonessentials, but I think that subsequent quotations will show that Calvin intended more: he meant that the apprehension of all truth is progressive.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁶¹ *CO* 6, 459.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 466.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 472-73.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 524-25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 499-500.

⁶⁶ "... vehementer esse collaudatum." So the Spanish Protestant Dryander (Francisco d'Enzinias) wrote to Calvin, August 3, 1545: *CO* 12, 127 (no. 673). Dryander lived at Wittenberg 1544-46.

⁶⁷ "In hoc cursu adhuc hodie pergimus" (*CO* 6, 473).

⁶⁸ *CO* 7, 689-748.

⁶⁹ Letter to Marbach in August, 1544: *CO* 15, 212-13 (no. 1998). Cf. *Defensio sanae et orthodoxae doctrinae de sacramentis* (1555), where Calvin outlines what, so he believed, was at stake for Luther in the eucharistic controversy: *CO* 9, 18. But this did not mean, as we shall see, that Calvin revised his earlier judgment of Luther's opinion as in other respects idolatrous. "Ego tamen sepulta esse haec omnia cuperem," he wrote to Bucer in October 1549: *CO* 13, 439 (no. 1297).

⁷⁰ Cf. Haller's remark to Bullinger in a letter of December 28, 1554: that Calvin always seemed to defend Luther and Bucer too much: *CO* 15, 362 (no. 2072).

⁷¹ Letter dated October 24, 1554: *CO* 15, 274 (no. 2034).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 276 (my italics).

⁷³ So, e.g., in a letter to Martin Seidemann, March 14, 1555: *CO* 15, 501-02 (no. 2148).

⁷⁴ To Francis Burkhart, February 27, 1555: *CO* 15, 454 (no. 2123).

⁷⁵ Cf. *Ultima admonitio ad Westphalum*: "Nam quum Lutherus principium hoc semper tenuerit, nec sibi, nec cuiquam mortalium fas est, nisi ex verbo Dei sapere, mirandum ac dolendum est, tam imperiose eius placitis ecclesiam Dei astringi" (*CO* 9, 238).

⁷⁶ *CO* 8, 64.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 56-59.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁸⁰ See, for example, *CO* 9, 61, 69, 80, 109, and 111.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 52. If Luther failed to make the needed distinctions among the opinions of those who dissented from him, this was because he was provoked by misinformation (col. 69). On Luther's vehemence cf. cols. 56, 109.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 105. Cf. *Ultima admonitio ad Westphalum* (1557): the faults should be buried, not embraced as virtues (*CO* 9, 238). See also Calvin's letter to the pastors of Mömpelgard, May 8, 1544: *CO* 11, 704-08 (no. 547). Even at that time Calvin was confident that Luther himself disapproved the *simiae* and *Thrasones*. From Wittenberg, as from Jerusalem, had sprung both the gospel and mischief-makers.

⁸⁴ *CO* 9, 54. Here it is relevant to note that in May 1546 Calvin urged Vitus to complete the publication of Luther's *Commentary on Genesis*: *CO* 12, 317 (no. 781).

⁸⁵ *CO* 9, 70.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 104. Other references to Luther in the *Secunda defensio*, not discussed here, are: *CO* 9, 93, 94, 101, 107.

⁸⁹ *CO* 9, 438. Carlstadt's *commentum* refers no doubt to his odd theory that when Jesus uttered the words "This is my body" he pointed, not to the bread, but to himself. On Luther's *inconsideratus fervor*, see also col. 442.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 438.

⁹¹ *CO* 6, 241. To Pighius (*loc. cit.*) as to Gabriel (*CO* 9, 454), Calvin quotes Luther's own famous utterance: "Whether I like it or not, my adversaries oblige me to become wiser every day." Calvin does not give Luther's words exactly. See *De captivitate Babylonica*: *WA* 6, 497.

⁹² *CO* 9, 442.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 453. For other references to Luther in the work against Gabriel, see cols. 428, 435, 437, 441, 443 f., 448 (an important reminder that certain of Luther's works were translated and published at Geneva), and 454 (Gabriel hounded Luther even to the grave by claiming that he drank himself to death).

⁹⁴ Cf. Eekhof: "Calvijn ziet dus zijne reformatie niet als aan die van Luther tegenovergesteldt, doch als voortzetting en in denzelfden lijn gelegen" (*op. cit.*, p. 283).

⁹⁵ "Calvin ist der grösste und wohl auch einzige 'Schüler,' den Luther wirklich gehabt hat, d.h. der ihn zutiefst verstanden und, von ihm ausgehend, das Werk der Reformation mit einer eigenen Durchdringung der Botschaft des Evangeliums fortgesetzt und zu einer eigenen kirchlichen Gestalt gebracht hat" (*op. cit.*, p. 264).

⁹⁶ See the essays of Lohse, Meinholt, Mühlhaupt, to which we may add the monograph by Hans Grass, *Die Abendmahllehre bei Luther und Calvin; eine kritische Untersuchung* (2nd ed.; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1954).

⁹⁷ For instance, Luther says that faith is *notitia*, that it is *in intellectu*, that its object is *veritas* (*WA* 40-II, 25, 27 ff.). Calvin says that even assent is more a matter of the heart than of the mind (*Inst.*, III, ii, 8, 33). Again, it was Luther who took his stand upon the letter of Scripture in the eucharistic debate; Calvin, on the other hand, states expressly that the sole function of Scripture is to draw us to Jesus Christ (*CO* 9, 815).

⁹⁸ *Ultima admonitio ad Westphalum* (1557): *CO* 9, 238. Cf. the "Lutherolatry" that angered Bartholomaeus Bertlinus: letter to Bullinger, July 1554, in *CO* 15, 19 (no. 1987).

⁹⁹ ". . . ich denke an den Gedanken der Geschichtlichkeit des Reformators; an die Idee der Weiterentwicklung der Reformation und an die hehrzte Kritik an Luther vom Evangelium her." Hence Calvin could think of certain elements in Luther's teaching as vestigial blemishes. *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

¹⁰⁰ "Nos hoc dies noctesque incumbere, ut quae fideliter a nobis *tradita* sunt, in modum etiam, quem putamus optimum fore, *formemus*" (*CO* 6, 250; my italics).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁰² *Secunda defensio contra Westphalum*: *CO* 9, 91.

¹⁰³ Lemaître, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ *Secunda defensio contra Westphalum*: *CO* 9, 69, 92.

¹⁰⁵ *CO* 6, 602 (*Excuse aux Nicodémites*, 1544).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Responsio contra Pighium*: *CO* 6, 239-40.

¹⁰⁷ See Karl Gerhard Steck, *Lehre und Kirche bei Luther* ("Forschungen zur Geschichte und Lehre des Protestantismus," ed. Ernst Wolf, Series 10, Vol. XXVII, Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1963), pp. 206-07.

¹⁰⁸ *CO* 5, 457-60.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, the discussion by Alexander Barclay, *op. cit.*, chap. xii.

¹¹⁰ See the discussion in Jacques Pannier, *Les Origines de la confession de foi et la discipline des églises réformées de France* (Paris, 1936), pp. 90 ff.

¹¹¹ Letter to Archbishop Cranmer, April 1552: *CO* 14, 312-14 (no. 1619).

¹¹² Hence the custom of holding congregations is not merely useful, but virtually necessary. See Calvin's letter to Musculus, October 22, 1549: *CO* 13, 433 (no. 1294).

¹¹³ From Nicolas Colladon, *Vie de Calvin* (1565), *CO* 21, 96. I owe this and the preceding reference to the admirable discussion in Rudolphe Peter, ed., *Jean Calvin. Deux congrégations et exposition du catéchisme* (Cahiers de la Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), pp. xiii-xiv.

¹¹⁴ *CO* 10, II, 405 (no. 191). The remarks were made in a dedicatory epistle to Simon Grynaeus.

THE ELIZABETHANS ON LUTHER

WILLIAM A. CLEBSCH

BETWEEN 1520 and 1600 there were many hands to help draw the verbal portraits from which Englishmen gained their impression of Martin Luther. Of these, the draftsmen who knew the Reformer in his person were few. Robert Barnes is the chief of them. John Rogers lived for a time in Wittenberg. William Tyndale may have studied there briefly. Perhaps John Frith met Luther and his circle at the Marburg Colloquy. Surely ambassadors of Henry VIII sought sanctions for his divorce at the seat of the Reformation. In unintended accord with his preference for verbal communication, Englishmen knew Luther mainly by his writings—surely in Latin, but determinatively in translation. Their books presented interpretations and impressions of him which were mostly unfavorable until after his death. Appropriately enough, he eventually became known in England far more for his theology than for his person.

Upon its public announcement, Luther's rediscovered gospel was damned more than praised in England. So the balance remained during his lifetime. A few approving sketches by early advocates among Albion's sons were quickly defaced by monarchs, chancellors, and prelates. Thomas Cromwell's efforts to ally England with Evangelical princes brought a measure of appreciation for Luther after the death of Thomas More and John Fisher and until the trend was reversed in 1540, with Henry VIII's ill-fated marriage to Anne of Cleves and Cromwell's precipitous fall. Under Edward VI, English religion embraced many formal elements of Protestantism, not only the vernacular Scripture won by Cromwell but also a vernacular liturgy and the teaching of justification by faith alone. The ascendancy of Thomas Cranmer as reformer of doctrine and worship during Henry's last year and the reign of the boy King inaugurated the first period of Luther's popularity in England. This appreciation was, of course, posthumous.

If Henry's unilateral vacillations kept England from knowing Luther favorably during his lifetime, then the multilateral complexities of European politics contrived during the next two reigns to prolong a myopic view of Luther's followers. For while Evangelicals on

the Continent were defending themselves from imperial conquest and papal misrepresentation, England under Edward was welcoming the Reformed leaders' counsel in her own ecclesiastical affairs. In their time of trial, English Protestants found refuge from Bloody Mary mostly in Rhineland churches and cities. Upon the accession of Elizabeth I, one of these exiles returned to England, the man who more than any other depicted Luther as the restorer of true religion—the historiographer and martyrologist, John Foxe. Through successive editions of his immediately and lastingly popular "Book of Martyrs," Foxe kept Luther at the literal center of his story; thus he fixed upon Elizabethan and early Stuart England its clearest and most enduring picture of Luther.

The present essay tries to reconstruct the main lineaments of that Foxean picture, by reference to his translations, prefaces, and other literary remains to enforce the eminence of Foxe as one who appreciated Luther, and to assess the aspects of distortion which attended the traditional English view of Luther by virtue of its delayed formation. Finally the essay briefly appraises sixteenth-century English impressions of Luther.

To understand Foxe's portrait requires examining the shapes of antecedent *Lutherbilder* which Foxe undertook to erase, retouch, or otherwise alter. These pictures, themselves composite works of several hands, had been painted, first of all, by early English Protestants who as heretics were driven into exile on the Continent; second, by Henry, Thomas Wolsey, Fisher, and More; third, by biblical humanists like Crammer and Hugh Latimer who led the later Henrician and Edwardian reforms. After we have reviewed these portraits, the Luther which Foxe drew will command our prolonged attention.

I. LUTHER'S WRITINGS IN ENGLISH

Before 1526 Luther was read by Englishmen, if at all, in Latin or—more rarely—in German. Late in that year, Tyndale's *A compendious introducion vnto the pistle to the Romayns* set forth Luther's ideas in a translation and rearrangement of his words, but not mentioning the real author. The characterization fits Tyndale's Prologue to the 1525-26 New Testament in English, as well as Luther's sermon on the parable of wicked Mammon (1528). Also in 1528, and for the first time, a Luther writing appeared as such in English—from the royal printer, at that—when Richard Pynson's press published *A copy of the letters, wherein . . . kyng Henry the eyght made answere*

vnto a certayne letter of Martyn Luther . . . and also the copy of the foresaid Luthers letter; the Latin version had appeared from the same press in 1526. In a wordy, vitriolic preface, Henry castigated Luther's person and teachings, deplored the fact that "one or two Freres apostataes/ ron out of our realme" were "raignyng in riote & vnthrifte lyberte with you." The King charged Luther to put away "that sely wretched woman/ somtyme the spouse of Christ: Whom ye to youre bothe dampnatyon/ abuse in synfull lechery/ vnder the pretext of lafull matrimony"; moreover, Luther was advised to suffer long penance for lives lost in the Peasants' War, which—by Henry's accusation—he had incited.

The next Luther writing in English appeared in June 1529 from John Hoochstraten's press in Antwerp; it was *An exposition in to the seventh chaptre of the first pistle to the Corinthians*, set forth anonymously and accompanied by a duly attributed translation of Desiderius Erasmus' *Exhortation*. The likely translator, who apparently wanted to sanction Luther's ideas on marriage with the name of the "Prince of Scholars," was William Roy, a Franciscan observant of Greenwich who fled to the Continent before 1525 and helped Tyndale make the English New Testament. Only in recent times has the Lutheran authorship been recognized, although the *Exposition* was soon condemned as heretical while the *Exhortation* was frequently reprinted with official approval. Accurate identification of authorship befell the next Luther writing to appear in English, a translation of the exposition of Daniel 8, *De Antichristo* (WA 7, 722-72, 778). This writing appeared under the pseudonym "Richard Brightwell" as *The Revelation of Antichrist*, prefaced by *A pistle to the Christen reader* from the translator, Frith, and accompanied by a translation of Philipp Melanchthon's *Passional Christi und Antichristi* (1521). Hoochstraten published the booklet on July 12, 1529; its swift proscription is recorded in the Exeter diocesan register's reckoning, probably in 1530, of "The revelation of Antichrist of Luther" among certain heretical books. Thus by the time of the Augsburg Confession the known writings of Luther available in English were a letter casting Luther in the worst possible light and a proscribed tract.¹

To trace every English book which conveyed Luther's thought would require far more space than any essay can command. The translations attributed to him and published 1534-1640 number, according to *Short-Title Catalogue*, 39 imprints of 20 titles. In chronological order, those printed during Henry's cautious flirtations with Evangelical religion are as follows:

A boke made by a certayne great clerke agaynst the newe idole, and olde deuyll ([Anon.] 1534).

Here after ensueth a Propre treatyse of good workes ([1535?]).

The boke of the discrypcyon of the images of a verye chrysten bysshop, etc. ([Anon.] [1536?]).

A very excellent & swete exposition vpon the 22. psalme. Tr. Miles Coverdale (1537; another edition, anon., 1538; another issue, with date misprinted).

These books appear to have been printed in England. After the reaction under Stephen Gardiner, an edition of *The last wil and last confession of Martyn luthers faith* appeared, possibly in Zurich, in 1543. During Edward's reign, three more Luther works came from English presses:

The chiefe and pryncypall articles of the Christen saythe (1548).

A frutefull and godly exposition of the kyngdom of Christ. Tr. Walter Lynne (1548).

A ryght notable sermon vpon the twenteth chapter of Johan. Tr. R. Argentine (1548).

Foxe began his literary career by translating from Latin three sermons, one by Johannes Oecolampadius, one by Urbanus Rhegius, and one by Luther. The last was prepared at Stepney in 1547; James Frederick Mozley assigned its publication "to Foxe's earliest months in London, before he entered the duchess of Richmond's house."²² It was dedicated to one Henry Ruoche, and is: *A Frutfull Sermon of the moost Euangelicall wryter M. Luther/ made of the Angelles*, attributed by *Short-Title Catalogue* to "[1560?]." However, two editions of *A saythfull admonycion of a certen trewe pastor* were published anonymously in Zurich in 1554, signed by "Eusebius Pamphilus" as translator and purportedly printed by C. Freeman in Greenwich.

Foxe's work touched off a minor torrent of Luther translations and editions during Elizabeth's reign. Foxe edited and prefaced Henry Bull's translation of *A commentarie upon the fistene psalmes*, published by Thomas Vautrollier (1577; other editions 1615 and 1637), and he introduced Henry Wace's translation of *Special and Chosen Sermons* (1578 and 1581). Other Elizabethan editions include:

An exposition of Salomons booke, called Ecclesiastes (1573).

A commentarie vpon the epistle to the Galathians (1575, 1577, 1580, 1588, 1588, 1603, 1615, 1616, and 1635).

A prophesie out of the nienth chap. of Esaie (1578).

A right comfortable treatise for them that labor and are laden (the famous "Fourteen of Consolation"). Tr. William Gace (1578, 1579, 1580).

A very comfortable sermon concernyng the commyng of Christ (1578).

A treatise, touching the libertie of a Christian. Tr. James Bell (1579, 1579, 1636).

A commentarie vpon the two epistles generall of Sainct Peter and that of Sainct Jude. Tr. Thomas Newton (1581).

A methodicall preface before the epistle to the Romanes. Tr. W.W. ([1594]; another edition, 1632).

(The *Short-Title Catalogue* numbers of the English editions mentioned above are 16962-17000^a inclusive.)

Thus named, roughly in the order of their appearance, Luther writings in English seem impressive until we recall that they included, from the output of the sixteenth century's most widely published author, only one major work (the Commentary on Galatians); perhaps a dozen quite minor tracts, many of them excerpts from major works; and a number of sermons. Excepting *On Christian Liberty*, the great 1521 treatises were unknown in English. *De servo arbitrio*, probably the most telling and systematic of Luther's theological works, remained untranslated into English. The revealing early lectures antedating the Ninety-Five Theses were unknown in English until very recent years. The labor of Foxe and other Luther translators is great only in proportion to the paucity of the corpus; but so to loom is yet to loom very large.

Through the centuries Luther has enjoyed no greater popularity in England than he enjoyed in the Elizabethan era, down to the time in which his most important theological works received systematic rendering into English during the recent Luther renaissance. During the Interregnum, Captain Henry Bell's translation of the *Tischreden* appeared as *Dris. Martini Lutheri Colloquia Mensalia or Dr. Martin Luther's Divine Discourses at His Table* (1652, 1659). Otherwise, only eleven titles, not all of them new, were published between 1641 and 1700. The English evangelicals focused attention on Lutheran hymnody as transmitted through Moravian pietism, but Augustus Toplady died before finishing his translation of *De servo arbitrio*. Henry Cole in the nineteenth century Englished some nine volumes of selections from Luther, and Luther enjoyed a fervent but limited popularity among the period's literary and scholarly figures—Carlyle, Coleridge, Hare, Maurice, Kingsley. The quatercentenary of the Reformer's birth prompted an edition of the Theses and the three

famous tracts of 1521, under the title *First Principles of the Reformation*, translated by Henry Wace and Carl Adolf Buchheim (1883).

II. LUTHER'S SEVERAL FACES, 1520-1559

During the three decades between his rise to fame and his death, contrasting impressions of Luther were received by and conveyed to Englishmen. As early as February 1519, Luther knew that he was being read in England; A. G. Dickens reminds us that "later in the same year Erasmus informed him that certain very great people in England were admiring his writings."³ Erasmus might have added that the greater of these were about to denounce him. By late 1520 or early 1521 his books were burned in Cambridge, and before 1521 ended he was branded as archheretic by Fisher at a public book-burning and in a book by the King himself. These early English sketches made the controversial Luther either rediscoverer of the gospel or an apostate monk insanely wrecking Christendom. Moreover, before 1525 Englishmen hardly colored the sketches with their native hues. Cochlaeus (Johann Dobneck) might have written most of Henry's *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* (as perhaps Fisher did) and the admiring Cambridge scholars who met at White Horse Inn to discuss and imbibe Luther's teaching were aptly dubbed "Little Germany." Crown and mitre began to condemn the Wittenberger in public ceremonies of 1521 and 1526, falsely confident that their diatribes would discredit his theology, and biblical humanists who accepted his expositions of the Greek New Testament were secretly feeding their souls at jeopardy to their careers.

Only indirectly and implicitly can we evidence a thriving group of English Protestants before 1525. The King's book pledged that Luther's way of maiming Christian sacraments would not enter the realm, and Fisher's sermon against "ye pernicious doctryn of M. luuther" (1521) derided new faith-justification as old heresy warmed over, therefore no real threat to England. During the service at which Fisher preached that sermon, heretical books gathered from Oxford were burned, but William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, thought they appealed only to a few "incircumspect fools."⁴ Yet the influx of Protestant writings increased, extending importantly to Cambridge and London. By 1525, manuscript copies of Johann Bugenhagen's letter circulated, welcoming divers English Christians into the Evangelical camp. It pleaded that false reports about the Reformers ought to hinder none from embracing the

gospel. The Wittenberg pastor knew of many English Protestants, but More replied with self-assurance that the obvious consequences of the German Reformation—war, iconoclasm, broken vows, and the like—made Englishmen cling all the more avidly to their King's religion.

By late 1525, sheets of Tyndale's English New Testament were read at home, and Barnes had preached a reforming sermon at St. Edward's Church in Cambridge which was more Coletian than Lutheran. Early in 1526, the whole New Testament in Tyndale's translation was being sold, and a "raid" on Cambridge Protestants brought the hapless Barnes to trial. He and German merchants in London recanted on Quinquagesima Sunday while Fisher again denounced Luther at St. Paul's. The increasing approbation of Luther's teaching in England drew tacit admission in the sermon and explicit mention in the preface to its later printed version. For the first time, the central issue posed by Luther was debated in the vernacular. No longer did this guardian of the old religion nimbly assume that mere derogation of the man and blanket pejoration of his doctrine would purge his influence. Fisher preached about faith and justification, leaving on the periphery shibboleths about ecclesiastical infallibility, the peasants' revolt, and married clergy. Also in 1525-26 the famous letters were exchanged between Henry and Luther. The latter had opened the correspondence respectfully, because hearsay had it that Henry was leaning toward Evangelical religion. The King answered with heavy-handed polemics which are drab even for their dull vintage.

Contrary to the English leaders' intentions, all these affairs placed Luther in a certain good light. The vernacular word of God, which More would soon dub "Tyndale's Testament or Luthers Testament," was burnt along with Luther's writings. Branded as his allies were men in the respected tradition of John Colet and Erasmus. His doctrine earned serious consideration by the realm's best theologian. He had been ready to bury the hatchet which Henry recklessly hurled back at him. Charges of gross immorality were explicitly refuted by Bugenhagen and repeated with diminishing effect by Catholics. For the decade's first half, then, defenders of the old order—Wolsey, Henry, and Fisher—tried to paint Luther all black, a device that More would try again between 1529 and 1534. But in 1525-26, shades of gray were appearing to English eyes and also some very dark blots showed on the purportedly white robes of mother church.

English Protestants, who by no means merely echoed Luther,

seized every opportunity to plead the worthiness of the gospel, leaving its rediscoverer to take the second place. Although that ranking did not thrust Luther to the foreground, it was truer to his *theologia crucis* than was his increasing personal fame in the Evangelical provinces of Germany. No doubt the pseudonymity or anonymity of the earliest translations of Luther into English by Tyndale, Roy, and Frith asked for the consideration of a viewpoint apart from the personality of its originator. The gospel, thus presented, indeed commended itself during the latter half of the decade.

On March 7, 1528, Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London, commissioned the realm's brightest literary light to reveal the errors of Protestant opinions "lest the catholic faith perish utterly." Conceding possible hyperbole, we must note that the spread of Reformation books was in fact alarming. More, who had written Latin *libelli* against Luther early in the decade, became the leading vernacular polemicist for traditional religion. Even the demands of the chancellorship from 1529 to 1532 failed to slow his ardent but artless flow of words against Protestants abroad and at home. He identified virtually all writings about the gospel with Luther, giving the term "Lutheran" its first English denotation of anything broadly Protestant or antipapal. Differences between the Reformers' viewpoints produced in More's mind only the inference of falsehood from disagreement. He pictured Luther as the general of all ecclesiastical rebels, with Tyndale his captain among English heretics. Personal calumny for an apostate monk lecherously living in feigned marriage with an apostate nun and for the madness of defying the divine truth of Catholic teaching—only these shells fit More's artillery. He fired them repeatedly. By way of blaming Luther for all recent religious errors, More gave him implied credit for the rich variety of English Protestant thought that issued in books of both Continental and domestic origin from 1526 through 1534. Most of More's rivals in this war of words concealed or denied their dependence on Luther. Perhaps the most notable exception is a little poem by Roy and Jerome Barlowe, *Rede me and be not wrothe/ For I saye no thyng but trothe* (1528), which rejoiced in Luther's having proved the vanity of monastic religion and delighted in his refutation of Erasmus' teaching on free will. But no English tract claimed outright to espouse Luther's teaching as such. None from this period praised his life or leadership. Ironically, his front rank among the Reformers was stated in English by the man who lived as his archenemy and died as his cousin in conscience—More. Luther and his circle stood

aghast at Henry's execution of More and Fisher, and five years afterward Luther recurred to the event in writing about the burning of his one English friend, Barnes.

Barnes's death in 1540 marked the end of Henry's halting steps toward friendly relations with Lutheran princes, steps encouraged by Cromwell and somewhat promoted by negotiations in which Barnes was involved. After crediting every evidence of royal good will toward the Lutherans and every testimony to Lutheran influence upon English religion, it is fair to conclude that, all told, these years of moderate reform did very little—hardly more than did the ensuing years of Henrician reaction under Gardiner's influence—to promote Luther in the English favor. The man and his teaching remained as opprobrious to Henry as they had been in the *Assertio*; the King carried this opinion to his grave. Cranmer as Henry's archbishop of Canterbury did the monarch's bidding without forfeiting convictions that favored cardinal Protestant tenets, such as *justificatio sola fide*, vernacular Scripture and common worship, and Scripture as the overriding element in the *regula fidei*. But Cranmer's opportunities to freight the English Church with Protestant precepts while Henry lived were few; he seized those which fell to him and he advanced men like Latimer even when Gardiner's star rode high. But to credit Luther would have been to lose the higher prize of the gospel.

During Edward's reign, a Reformation in both name and substance made England a Protestant realm with a thoroughness that proved irreversible by Mary's efforts to avenge her mother by returning her people to papal allegiance. The decade of contrasts that followed upon Henry's demise taught Englishmen the costs of choosing between full Protestantism and abject papalism, and any unmixed version of Christianity took on a bad taste. Protestantism, if not profoundly English, was at least not formidably alien. During its tryout under Edward, however, the Continental leaders who were available to guide the English Church belonged to the Rhenish, not the Saxon, branch of the Reformation. To be sure, there were elements of the 1549 and 1552 Books of Common Prayer—notably Cranmer's *Litanie*—which drew on Lutheran sources. The English primers compiled since 1529 by such men as George Joye and William Marshall had done the same, and helped bequeath to the English liturgy its Evangelical flavor. Yet Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr Vermigli, John à Lasco, and Bernard Ochino were among the men whom James Gairdner designated as those "many Lutheran divines migrated . . . into

England, where they were received with favour and influenced the Protector's counsels."⁵ Three minor Luther writings published during Edward's reign were noted above.

When the alternative of papal allegiance was tested under Mary, the royal policy officially swept away all measures of reform that had won their way since 1529. Unofficially, of course, devotion to the gospel transcended obedience to the church in the minds of many. Some of these won martyrs' crowns, many fled to Continental cities (few Lutheran areas were able to welcome the exiles), and probably most stayed silently at home while the Queen wrought her follies. Among the exiles was the man who, under the Elizabethan settlement, would show Luther to his countrymen anew—and accurately.

Before focusing on Foxe, we must acknowledge certain recent interpretations which make the English Reformation a decidedly Lutheran development according to the spirit as well as the letter. Following the lead of Henry Eyster Jacobs, Neelak Serawlook Tjernagel and Carl S. Meyer carefully compared sixteenth-century formularies of the Church of England with Lutheran catechisms and confessions. Tjernagel worked on the Henrician period and declared that "the English Reformation was to find its theology at Wittenberg."⁶ Meyer made Elizabeth a Lutheran by conviction and a strong advocate of Melanchthon's theology, but his statements of detail were tentative and often inferential. It is important to remember that Tudor monarchs, especially Elizabeth, wrought their religious inclinations into actualities not so much by doctrines as by liturgies and not so much by liturgies as by their choices of bishops who gave sacred representation to the royal presence throughout the realm. Henry chose Cranmer and accepted Latimer despite rather than because of their Protestant leanings. When Edward came to the throne, men of Reformed rather than of Evangelical convictions were promoted. Of Elizabeth's bishops only Richard Cheney has been called a Lutheran, although Edmund Grindal and Edwin Sandys took Luther as a Christian hero worthy of celebration. It is accurate, in Meyer's phrase, that "Lutheranism did not emerge during the Elizabethan Religious Settlement as it did during Henry's break with Rome."⁷ That trend diminishes from a very meager base. Nobody would doubt that Luther's religious and theological ideas were available and, in varying degrees, understood wherever Christendom underwent Reformation during the sixteenth century. In England they hardly gained favor for being attributed to their originator. Precisely that injustice Foxe undertook to redress.

III. LUTHER IN THE "BOOK OF MARTYRS"

When was this glorious reformation of the church ever true or like to be true, if it be not true now, in this marvellous alteration of the church in these our latter days? or when was there any such conversion of christian people in all countries ever heard of, since the apostles' time, as hath been since the preaching of Martin Luther?

(*Acts and Monuments*, IV, 256)

The Elizabethan Eusebius placed the tales of Christianity's heroes and martyrs in a setting of distress and persecution which he brought to a climax within his own lifetime. His masterpiece sought to detail, as the title of the 1563 edition put it, "Actes and Monumentes of these latter and perillous dayes touching matters of the Church, wherin are comprehended and described the great persecutions & horrible troubles, that haue bene wrought and practised by the Romish Prelates, speciallye in this Realme of England and Scotlande, from the yeare of our Lorde a thousande, vnto the tyme now present." The edition of 1570, reprinted in 1576, "Newly recognized and inlarged," was called "the Ecclesiasticall History" and it stretched "from the primitiue time, till the raigne of king Henry the Eyght." The 1583 "Actes and Monuments" was "Newly reuised and recognised, partly also augmented"; now its span was "from the primitiue age to these latter tymes of ours." Always, Foxe built his story around Luther as the man who opened a new epoch of church history, an epoch that was quite literally Foxe's own time.

Foxe was born in 1516 in Lincolnshire, and the chronology of his life frames that of the English Reformation. He proceeded Bachelor of Arts at Oxford in 1537, just as Henry was warming to friendly relations with German princes. His academic career spanned the rest of Luther's and Henry's lifetimes. In 1547 he went with wife to London as a tutor to Thomas Howard, later Duke of Norfolk, and to Henry Howard, later Earl of Northampton. At the height of Edwardian reform he was ordained deacon by Nicholas Ridley, bishop of London, and early in Mary's reign he fled to Strassburg, then Frankfurt, then Basel. While abroad he published accounts of the martyrdoms of John Wycliffe and John Huss, and he collected records of religious persecutions in England. On the accession of Elizabeth I, he returned home, was ordained priest in 1560, and came into possession of the papers of Cranmer's secretary, Richard Morice. Access also to episcopal registers aided his project to publish in English a large version of the Latin "Book of Martyrs." As prebend of Salisbury, Foxe labored at this and related tasks, becoming before his

death in 1587 the most widely read of English historiographers. For, by order of Convocation, copies of his 1570 *Ecclesiastical History* were placed in cathedral churches and in the houses of archbishops and bishops, archdeacons and deacons. He published also his own sermons and translations of Reformation writings, and he collected and edited the works of Tyndale, Frith, and Barnes.

Keenly sensitive to his own era's novelty, Foxe unhesitatingly made Luther the great renovator of religion. To Heinrich Bullinger from Basel in 1559 he professed his preoccupation with British history: "Yet I shall not pass over the sacred history of other nations, should it come my way." He patently endorsed and commended the judgment, attributed to one John Higgis (alias Noke, alias Johnson), "that Luther had more learning in his little finger, than all the doctors in England in their whole bodies" (IV, 179). The digital location of erudition is less important than the adoption of Luther as the man who recovered the gospel for Englishmen. As a matter of fact, Foxe gave Luther more concentrated attention than any other Continental person save Constantine the Great, Frederick III, and King Sigismund of Hungary, and nearly twice as much space as he devoted to his favorite English martyr, Thomas Bilney. Of the Englishmen who received more words than Luther there were four villains (Gardiner, Mary, More, and Wolsey) and a few such heroes as Thomas Becket, Wycliffe, Edmund Bonner, Henry (also partly villain), Cranmer, Cromwell, Latimer, and Ridley.

Foxe's praise for Luther, to be sure, was bounded. In prefacing his 1547 translation of Luther's Sermon on the Angels, he found the Reformer deficient with respect to the sacraments, but attributed the defect to human finitude. In the "Book of Martyrs," Foxe took pains to soften Anglican dislike for Luther's eucharistic theology. He cannily presented two Reformation teachings, "the one part being called, of Luther, Lutherans; the other having the name of Sacramentaries." Since the Marburg Colloquy the latter had been an English term of opprobrium. Knowing how exacerbated were disagreements about the Lord's Supper, Foxe went beyond name-calling. To deny transubstantiation was the nub of the matter, he thought, and a point on which all nonpapists agreed. As to positive theories, "if there have been any defect in Martin Luther," Englishmen should not fault him for it because his doctrine was not "so discrepant from us, that therefore he ought to be exploded." Instead, Anglicans should "give to Luther a moderate interpretation; and if we will not make things better, yet let us not make them worse than they be, and let us bear,

if not with the manner, yet at least with the time of his teaching . . ." (IV, 318). In the 1563 edition, Foxe was already pleading for Protestant unity that would eschew partisan labels: "And would to God that all things, in all places, were so free from all kind of dissension, that there were no mention made amongst Christians of Zuinglians and Lutherans, when neither Zuinglius nor Luther died for us; but that we might be all one in Christ. Neither do I think that any thing more grievous could happen unto those worthy men, than for their names so to be abused to sects and factious, who so greatly withstood and strove against all factious" (V, 9).

With that slight reservation, Foxe set Luther at the forefront of all who restored religion from papal deformation. Luther did not arrive out of the blue, for indeed Pico della Mirandola, Lorenzo Valla, and Erasmus "had somewhat broken the way before, and had shaken the monks' houses. But Luther gave the stroke, and plucked down the foundation, and all by opening one vein, long hid before, wherein lieth the touchstone of all truth and doctrine, as the only principal origin of our salvation, which is, our free justifying by faith only, in Christ the Son of God" (IV, 259). It was Luther who, "urging and reducing things to the foundation of Scripture," opened the new era; he recurred to truth in his teaching and preaching, and thus the usurped ecclesiastical authority, "armed with laws and rigour, did strive against simple verity" by persecuting the faithful (IV, 348, 349).

Foxe gave Englishmen, in William Haller's phrase, their "first comprehensive account of Luther and the German reformers," not only by praising him but by having Luther appear in the most gripping episodes of his narrative.⁸ In all editions and through all its expansions, the martyrology remained a unified, well-constructed story, at the heart of which stood Luther. Mozley, the admiring biographer of Foxe, noted that from the first the great martyrologist conceived of a story in "two pretty equal parts, divided by the blazing forth of Luther in 1517."⁹ The chief interest was always in persecutions, ecclesiastical and civil, against pure, evangelical faith, and Luther, who himself marveled at the mildness of his own sufferings on behalf of "my gospel," was no ready-made Foxean hero. Yet by placement and by attention he was skilfully made *the* hero. For Luther was the rod by which Foxe measured the faith of his proper English martyrs—explicitly in the case of such men as Bilney, Frith, Tyndale, and Barnes, and implicitly in all the rest. Apart from Luther's own life story, mentions of the German were made promi-

ment by infrequency; Foxe made him narratively strategic and always presented him favorably.

A few samples must suffice. Barnes "was made strong in Christ, and got favour both with the learned in Christ, and with foreign princes in Germany, and was great with Luther, Melancthon [sic], Pomeran," etc. (V, 419). The articles against Jeffery Lome of London accused him of translating and "having and dispersing abroad sundry books of Martin Luther's . . ." (V, 26). In printing an account of the arrest, trial, and death of Thomas Sommers, Foxe inserted marginal notes, including "Luther's books burned in Cheapside" (V, 453). The greatest blasphemy of all, Foxe thought, was to punish people for studying or to burn Tyndale's translation of the New Testament, the book which Dickens called "the chief vehicle of early Lutheranism" in England.¹⁰

Upon those whom he regarded as the greatest Christian heroes, Foxe bestowed red-letter days in his *Kalendar*; the 1563 edition of the *Book of Martyrs* gave this honor to a dozen Englishmen since Wycliffe—also to Hus and Luther. The 1583 revision added a half-dozen recent Englishmen but no other Continentals save Jerome of Prague.

For the substance of his central story of Luther's life, Foxe claimed no originality but drew upon Melanchthon. Between 1563 and 1570 his use of this material expanded greatly, although he still claimed "only to run over some principal matters of his [Luther's] life and acts," since "the laborious travails, and the whole process, and the constant preachings of this worthy man . . . are sufficiently declared in the history of John Sleidan . . ." (IV, 259). Details were added in 1570 which heightened the sense of papal antagonism to Luther and which thus augmented his role as that of a persecuted man. Certain matters were excised from the earlier story, particularly from Melanchthon's treatment of the Reformer's death. Foxe did, however, dwell on Luther's own death by comparing it point for point with that of his most "vehement impugner," Johann Maier von Eck; Luther was blessed with long life, a quiet death in his native country, conscious prayer at the end, and an honorable burial, whereas his detractor died miserably, speaking his last words about money and ambition (VIII, 651, 652).

Thus the Englishman in his famous work put into compelling, narrative form his announced conviction that "the Lord of his mercy . . . [did] look upon his church, and send down his gracious

reformation [when,] . . . through the gracious excitation of God, came Martin Luther . . ." (IV, 172).

IV. FOXE'S OTHER PORTRAYALS OF LUTHER

Many less famous literary works by Foxe also impressed upon Elizabethans an entirely favorable portrait of Luther. As biographer he was carrying to completion work begun by his elder friend, John Bale; as translator and editor he stood in the tradition of Tyndale and Frith and Barnes, whose works he published as indirect tribute to the influence of Luther upon these founders of English Protestantism. These books combine to erase any doubt that Foxe was the sixteenth century's most assiduous and most effective interpreter of Luther to Englishmen. We have mentioned the first of them, the early rendering of Luther's Sermon on the Angels, which Foxe judged "very expedient and also necessary in Chrystes churche . . . for openyng of many mysteryes . . ." Like Saint Peter, Luther may have had a fault; yet, "I doubt not, you wyll lyke him well as he is worthy."

The most important Luther translation known in Elizabethan England was that of the Commentary on Galatians, published in 1575 with commendation by Sandys. The bishop knew that "certain godly learned men haue most sincerely translated [it] into our language. . . . Some beganne it according to such skill as they had. Others godly affected, not suffering so good a matter in handling to be marred, put to their helping hands for the better framing and furthering of so vworthy a vvorke. They refuse to be named, seeking neither their ovne gaine or glory . . ." We can be sure that Foxe was not among the "some who originally bungled this project, and only by surmise, cogent in the extreme, can we place him among the others. Their title emphasized that the commentary "set forth most excellently the glorious riches of Gods grace and power of the gospell, with the difference betwene the law and the gospell, and strength of faith declared"; it dedicated the translation to "all true Christian beleeuers, especially such as inwardly being afflicted and greeued in conscience, doe hungre and thirst for iustification in Christ Iesu." Sandys commended the work "as a treatise most comfortable to all afflicted consciences exercised in the Schole of Christ. The Author," he went on, "felt vwhat he spake, and had experience of vwhat he vwrite, and therefore able more liuely to expresse both the assaultes and the saluing, the order of the battell, and the meane of the vic-

tory." The translators added their commendation, praising the book as among the best then available in England for religious effect and doctrinal purity. Luther's experience and expression of grace were unmatched since the time of the apostles (a Foxean theme). Luther stood in the spiritual lineage of Ananias, Paul, and Thomas; he saw Christ! Raised in blind superstition and monkish idolatry, "at length it so pleased almighty God to beginne with this man . . ." (Foxe again?). Luther's spiritual struggle was depicted in accurate detail, referring its resolution not to any attack upon the church but to the perception that God's justice shown forth in Christ was "the iustice of God to be executed vpon his Sonne to sauе vs from the stroke thereof. . ." Having seen that, Luther "started vp from his bedde, so confirmed in faith, as nothing afterward could appall him . . ." The writer(s?) of these lines claimed to know about Luther from his works and from writings of persons conversant with him. His career was sketched, from his desire "gently to dispute" over indulgences in 1517 through the Pope's attacks. Obviously christological allusions portrayed Luther as "hated of men, impugned of deuills, reiecte of nations, by solemne authority condemned, distressed with infirmities, and with allmaner of tentations tried and proued."

Luther's view of sacraments was moderately deplored and neatly excused as "sticking to nere to the letter yet he ioyneth not so with the Papist, that he leaueth there any transubstantiation or idolatrie." That was "one little wart," no reason "to cast away the whole body," and no such flaw appeared in the book the translators were endorsing. In "respect to the simple," they purposely "spunged out and omitted such stumbling places, being but few, which might offend." If Luther had not distinguished law from gospel and preached the true means of justification, then who, they asked, might have dared to do so?

The phrasing may well be Foxe's. There is a marginal note about the sacraments, referring the reader to John Jewel's *Apologia pro ecclesia Anglicana* and to "the booke of monuments fol. 992. Col. 2" (the reference is to the 1570 edition). Whatever part Foxe may have played in composing the preface and making the translation, the sentiments here summarized are an extremely apt résumé of the entire treatment of Luther in *Acts and Monuments*.

In pressing Luther's great commentary on the attention of Englishmen, the translators stipulated two conditions. First, the book must be read entire, and not by parts here and there; thus none would misconstrue Luther's understanding of good works—"in case of dutifull obedience [as contrasted with justification by faith], Luther here

excludeth no good works." Second, the reader must emulate Luther's spirituality: "For albeit most true it is, that no greater comfort to the soule of man can be found in any booke next to the holy scripture, then in this commentary of M. Luther: so this comfort hath little place, but onely where the conscience being in heauiness hath neede of the phisicions hand."

Moreover, the introduction distinguished justification before God by faith only, as taught by Paul, from justification before men by good works flowing from faith, as taught by James. Every hint of antinomianism in the commentary was offset by the introduction. Thus a half century after Henry's and Luther's correspondence, the commonest English suspicion of Luther still recalled the Peasants' War as connected with the Protestant Reformation in Germany. Another dubiety of Englishmen about Luther involved his conservatism regarding the sacrament of the Supper. Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments* and the introduction to the Commentary on Galatians alike, was protecting Luther on the same two flanks that had been guarded by Tyndale and Frith in the 1520's.

The Galatians commentary, of all Luther's theological writings, has been the favorite of English readers down the centuries and has sparked more than one revival of English religion. Its influence was traced by Ernest Gordon Rupp in *The Righteousness of God*. Down the ages this commentary comforted such formative persons in the history of English religion as John Bunyan and Charles Wesley. As he read the book, Bunyan tells us in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, "I found my condition in his experience, so largely and profoundly handled as if his Book had been written out of my heart; this made me marvel . . ."¹¹ Charles Wesley called the book "nobly full of faith," and but for John Wesley's own testimony that it was the reading of Luther's preface to Romans that moved his heart to be "strangely warmed," Rupp would have believed that the founder of Methodism was reading the same book.¹² The commentary was retranslated more than once in the nineteenth century.

But it was by no means the only Elizabethan translation of Luther; Foxe himself had a hand in two others. He prefaced Bull's translation of *A Commentarie vpon the Fiftene Psalms, called Psalmi Graduum, that is, Psalms of Degrees: Faithfullly copied out of the lectvres of D. Martin Luther, very frutefull and comfortable for all Christian afflicted consciences to reade*, published by Vautrollier in 1577, with subsequent editions in 1615 and 1637. Like the preface to the Commentary on Galatians, its title indicates that Luther had

come to be regarded in England as especially useful for remedying false or failing faith. Indeed this preface, replete with just such alliterations, remarked on Luther and his particular value for Englishmen. Foxe thought that commentaries were helpful "both for opening places of difficulty, for dissolving doubts, and debating of controuersies," and he rejoiced that God blessed his times above all others with "worthy workers in his word." Luther had been neglected, misjudged, or maligned by too many in England, whereas "emonges many preachers and teachers of this our time" he was, in truth, "most chiefly worthie, not only of iust commendation, but also to be compared with the chiefest"

Luther, Foxe thought, was incomparable as a comforter of afflicted consciences and as a theologian who correctly distinguished law from gospel. Not to distinguish them, Foxe had learned from him, led either to despair or to blind security, and to have made Christ a lawgiver, as the Roman Church had done, was to have forfeited salvation. To have Luther as a commentator on Galatians and the Fifteen Psalms, even if one had "no other expositour," was yet "almost sufficient to make a perfect souldier against all the fierie darts of the tempting enemie." And to have all other writers but lack Luther would be to foreshorten the truth of Christian divinity. Just as Bull's lifelong ambition (he died in 1575) was fulfilled by making the translation, Foxe promised that the diligent reader's life would be fulfilled by learning the substance of Luther's teaching.

Again in 1578, Vautrollier published a Luther translation by William Gace which was prefaced by Foxe: *Special and chosen sermons . . . for the necessary instruction and edification of such, as hunger and seeke after the perfect knowledge and inestimable glorie which is in Christ Iesu, to the comfort and saluation of their soules.* Thirty-four sermons filled 481 quarto pages with black-letter print. Now Luther was so well-known and appreciated in England, Foxe judged, that no lengthy commendation of him or his sermons was needed. The "singular frute" of this book was that it "set forth Christ in his right glorie, in his full riches and royal estate to the heartes and soules of men" Indeed, "where the frute of all other studies decayeth and has his end, the frute of this study abydeth for euer." Of all expositors of Scripture, Foxe knew "none or fewe, in these our dayes, more liuely to open these comforts vnto vs out of Gods worde, then this Doctor and Preacher" As Luther had put the sermons excellently in German and then Latin, so Gace "no lesse plainly and faithfully englisched the same for the commoditie and vse

of our cou[n]tryfolke of England." Thus "we have gotten vnto vs one good preacher in England more than we had before," and "in such townes and villages, wherein before were mute ministers, KOPHA PROSOPA, this Preacher now may supplie the lacke . . ." The anthology of Luther's sermons represented the leading themes of his thought but followed no apparent principle of organization.

The art and effect of Foxe's prefaces depended on his quite clear understanding of Luther's christocentrism. In sharp contrast stands Newton's 1581 translation of *A commentarie or Exposition vppon the two Epistles generall of Sainct Peter, and that of Sainct Iude . . . faithfullie gathered out of the Lectures and Preachings of that worthie Instrumente in Goddes Churche, Doctour Martine Luther . . . for the singuler benefite and comfort of the Godlie . . .* In a dedicatory epistle to Thomas Bromiley, Newton fawned on the lord chancellor and strained to ridicule the old religion of the "Cacolike Synagogue." By making papal Christianity totally absurd, he merely reversed the tactics of Henry and More against Luther, and Newton unwittingly left Luther a lesser man for having reformed it. Luther was "raised up . . . to bee as the Malle that should knock that blasphemous Goliah in the pate . . ." Despite its quotation of Erasmus' famous dictum to Duke Frederick about Luther, the diatribe is unrelieved and ineffective, for Newton saw in Luther none of the religious genius, none of the brilliant theologian, only an ecclesiastical swashbuckler.

Foxe understood precisely what the modern Luther renaissance rediscovered, that the Reformer's overriding significance lay in the fact that his religion centered on God and his theology centered on Christ. It was in the second point that Foxe saw great need for Elizabethan England to reappropriate Luther. In his own meditation entitled *Christ Iesus Triumphant*, written in Latin and posthumously Englished for publication in 1607, he declared:

For it is necessarie that this Doctrine should be retained and preached in the Chvrch: which beeing of long time hidden from Christians, and almost extinguished, the heroical, and mighty spirit of Christ, by the ministerie and preaching of Martin Luther, hath kindled and raysed up againe in the Chvrch. Yet such is the mischiefe and miserie of these wicked dayes, through the sutele practising of Sathan, that all Christendome is in an uproare about by matters of contentions, sects, and scisms, and in the meane time all regard of that which is the most principall point of our saluation, is set at nought, and almost brought agayne to vtter decay.

Foxe drew from Luther's christocentrism the implication that a

Christian would detest sects and factions. Thus his appreciation of Luther's relevance to the particular circumstances of the Elizabethan church had two chief aspects. On the one hand, Christians stood in constant need of the gospel of Christ as distinguished from all religious law, and Luther taught that distinction unmistakably. The formalism and institutionalism of the Church of England under Elizabeth could be saved from idolatry, Foxe thought, only by continual recurrence to the primacy of the gospel. On the other hand, factionalism raged despite the comprehension attempted by the Elizabethan settlement. Recusants and Puritans—and, after 1581, Anabaptists and Separatists—threatened the peace which should reign among Christians. The primacy of Christ, which Foxe thought Luther taught superbly, made harmony and unity accompany salvation. Certainly Foxe himself learned the lesson well, for, as Dickens stated, he "stood staunchly among those who bade the Church rely upon its spiritual weapons. Under Elizabeth he strove hard to save Anabaptists from the fire, and he enunciated a sweeping doctrine of tolerance even toward Catholics, whose doctrines he detested with every fibre of his being."¹³ The thoroughness with which he absorbed Luther's central religious and theological concerns perhaps shows itself nowhere more clearly than in Foxe's *A sermon of Christ crucified, preached at Paules Crosse the Friday before Easter, commonly called Goodfryday* (1570). The gospel was indispensable to salvation. Luther was indispensable to a right understanding of the gospel. Those who rightly understood Luther knew that salvation manifested itself in peace among men. These three statements summarize Foxe's concern for making Luther known to his contemporaries. They also draw the outlines of the portrait of Luther which Foxe held high before his countrymen.

* * *

The spirit of Luther's religion and theology began to settle on Elizabethan England like a London fog; hauntingly unspecifiable, and with real welcome only after his death, it just seeped into the atmosphere. Few, indeed, knew exactly whence it sprang or, for that matter, precisely what it was. Foxe was surely the captain of those few, as Bale and Sandys and Jewel and Hooker were among them. In the very imprecision of his influence, the Luther who affected the English Reformation was not the Lutherans' Luther, for his effect is not to be measured by the phrases of catechisms or articles or liturgies or hymns, but rather is to be found in attitudes and aspirations. A Luther burned at the stake might well have caught England in the

magnetism of his personality, and such a Luther would surely have stalked many more pages of the martyrology which formed English religion like nothing else between the vernacular Bible and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. But neither his doctrine, narrowly understood, nor his person greatly appealed to the English reformers, and therefore the mental picture of Luther which Elizabethans entertained cannot be reconstructed in sharp, representational lines. Yet an impressionistic portrait was there, largely created by Foxe, and it was influential. All this is by way of saying that Englishmen of his century viewed, in a certain profound sense, the real Luther. They beheld one whose message meant more than his doctrine. His person took second place before the merciful God he proclaimed. His name and visage blurred before those of the Christ he held up for view. His words only pointed toward what he took to be *the Word*. Defending or following him fell subordinate to pleas for peace and unity among believers. But, lest too much be claimed for the English, let it be emphasized that their two kingdoms were never as nicely distinguished as Luther's, and that their cherishing of Christ was so polite, in contrast with his, that it rarely could count above everything else.

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N O T E S

¹ See Clebsch, "Earliest Translations." The bibliography appended to this essay describes the documents referred to in the notes. Passages cited from the early books are easily located. References for citations from the eight-volume edition of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* are made parenthetically in the text.

² Mozley, p. 31.

³ Dickens, p. 68.

⁴ See Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, p. 13.

⁵ Gairdner, p. 261.

⁶ Tjernagel, p. 3.

⁷ Meyer, p. 91.

⁸ Haller, p. 174.

⁹ Mozley, p. 118.

¹⁰ Dickens, p. 33.

¹¹ Bunyan, p. 41.

¹² Rupp, pp. 45-46.

¹³ Dickens, p. 323

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY ON LUTHER

GEORGE HUNSTON WILLIAMS

THE UNITARIAN minister, natural scientist, biblical commentator, and historian who composed a comprehensive Church History in six volumes and helped in the printing of those volumes on a backwoods Pennsylvania press, dedicating the last four of them to President Thomas Jefferson, will never be listed among even the lesser interpreters of Martin Luther and his Reformation. Nevertheless, the fact that Joseph Priestley (1733-1804)—a major nonconformist scientist of England, an honorary citizen of Revolutionary France, an indefatigable foe of eighteenth-century Deism and (as he would argue) other forms of infidelity—chose to close his variegated career with a chronicle of Christianity in all lands and periods up to his own day, is more than a minor episode in ecclesiastical historiography. The fact that his six volumes, printed in the but recently settled village of Northumberland at the confluence of the East and West Branches of Pennsylvania's majestic Susquehanna River, proved to be the first universal history of Christianity in the New World makes his effort clearly worthy of attention.¹

When we come to deal with Priestley's picture of Luther and the Reformation in Germany, it will be primarily to assess the six-volume work as a whole, on the basis of the selected sample appropriate to the purpose of the present collection of Luther-evaluations in all centuries and in several national and confessional traditions from Robert Barnes to Paul Tillich. But in acknowledging that a treatment of Priestley on Luther is wholly a contribution to Priestley studies rather than to Luther studies, one would err in dismissing such a treatment as only a matter of eighteenth-century biography, regional history, or quaint *Americana*. Priestley was a representative figure of his age, in contact with men of importance in several lands and in many sections of public, scholarly, and religious life.² What he knew and thought of Luther gives us a sense of how a great portion of English-speaking Protestantism—not alone English Nonconformity—interpreted, at the end of the Age of Enlightenment, the Reformation of Luther. In the present collection of studies Priestley will thus represent the eighteenth century. In the only surveys to

date of the changing views of Luther in the English-speaking world by the Presbyterian Preserved Smith (1917)³ and the Methodist E. Gordon Rupp (1953),⁴ Priestley is not mentioned. As it happens, Priestley's section on Luther in his *Church History* was composed in the interval between two of the major spurts of interest in Luther which Rupp distinguishes in his essay.⁵

A treatment of Priestley on Luther thus fills a lacuna in the account of the evaluation of the German Reformer in English-speaking lands during a quiescent phase. It is of interest that Priestley did have more than casual contact with German culture. He could read, and he also understood spoken "High Dutch," as he called it. It was in 1774 that he visited the Rhineland as scholarly companion and librarian of William Fitzmaurice, Earl of Shelburne. In Worms, Priestley visited the Lutheran church and heard "a sermon in High Dutch at the Jesuits' church." In Strasbourg he "rambled into several Lutheran churches, where the ministers were catechising the children and young persons, and among others a class of young women about twenty years of age."⁶ In his American exile, Priestley lived, it should be remarked, in the area where Lutheran colonization was most in evidence. And while there is no clear indication of his using, in Philadelphia or elsewhere, any local Lutheran books for his historical writings, it is clear that he had contact with the German-speaking Moravian Brethren whom he admired for their missionary zeal, "their patience and perseverance";⁷ and that on at least one occasion he attended the divine service at Old Swedes' in Philadelphia, where, though he was disappointed that on that particular Sunday the sermon was, to his surprise, in Swedish, he did enjoy the liturgy and hymns and the fellowship after the service with the chief pastor, Dr. Nils Collin (1746-1831), a natural scientist like himself, whom he found also to be "completely Unitarian."⁸ For his Northumberland library Priestley eventually acquired a dozen or so German titles, mostly on chemistry but also several literary works, including the ten volumes of *Sämtliche Schriften* of the Leipzig author Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (d. 1769) and the *Schriften* in three volumes of the Swiss *littérateur* Salomon Gessner (d. 1780).⁹

In dealing with Priestley's picture of Luther and the Lutheran Reformation as printed by the Unitarian chemist and clergyman in obscure Northumberland on the Susquehanna, we shall first, in part I, examine the *Church History* as a whole and the motivations of the sedulous author in toiling over it almost to his death and then, in

part II, evaluate specifically his delineation of Luther and the German Reformation.

In presenting this essay in honor of Wilhelm Pauck, I am mindful not only of Professor Pauck's ready interest in anything historical that bears upon the changing image of his native land in the land of his adoption, but also of his great enthusiasm and empathetic capacity for viewing world history from the vantage point of a single person or place, no matter how obscure or even how remote it may be from the central action. As a former student of Professor Pauck, I cannot imagine another historian who would be more intrigued than he to read about how, with what resources and motivations, and for whom, an exiled Unitarian minister would be impelled to write and print six volumes of universal ecclesiastical history while living in a Pennsylvania village five days by stage coach from Philadelphia; nor can I imagine an historian more disposed than Professor Pauck to take a glance at what Priestley could possibly have said about Luther and about Germany, which at the time of the composition of the bulk of the *Church History* was "isolated" from both England and the United States by the might of Napoleon Bonaparte.

. A GENERAL HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN
CHURCH IN SIX VOLUMES
(NORTHUMBERLAND, PA., 1802-03)

Priestley thought of his *History*¹⁰ as an extension of his *History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ . . . Proving That at First the Christian Church Was Unitarian*, four volumes (Birmingham, 1786); and he originally intended therefore to carry it only through the patristic period, entitling it *A General History of the Christian Church to the Fall of the Western Empire*, in two volumes (Birmingham, 1790), dedicated to Samuel Shore.¹¹ In the dedicatory letter to the philanthropist Samuel Shore (1738-1828)¹² Priestley put foremost among his motivations as an ecclesiastical historian his desire, in reviewing the rise of Christianity and its phenomenal progress against all human obstacles, to confirm "to us the most valuable of all human prospects, that of a resurrection to immortal life, a prospect which nothing but the gospel can give us."¹³ Then, referring to the martyrs, accounts of whom he thought would especially inspire "young persons,"¹⁴ Priestley stressed as his second main concern the desire to show "the progress that Christianity made while it was left to its own energy, unfettered by that fatal alliance which it afterwards unhappily formed with the powers of this world." Then he

would chronicle "the commencement of that most unnatural alliance which has been the source of such dreadful abuses, and which continues to this day, when the State, instead of receiving the spirit of the Christian church, a spirit of meekness, temperance, heavenly-mindedness, and universal charity, imparted to the ministers of the church, its own corrupt principles and manners; inflaming them with a thirst for wealth and power, and even divesting them of the principles of humanity and compassion, whenever any obstacle opposed their ambitious views; so that at length the persecution of Christians by Christians became as bloody and unrelenting, as that of the pagan emperors."¹⁵

Because of his great concern for demonstrating in some detail the adverse effect which pagan philosophy and coercion exercised by the Christianized state of the post-Constantinian period had upon Jesus' revelation, Priestley wrote his *History* for the ancient periods by drawing extensively upon the original patristic sources in Greek and Latin¹⁶ in which even his rebuilt American library came to abound.¹⁷

Although Priestley was not certain in 1790 that he would carry his *History* beyond the fall of the Roman Empire, he at least alluded to subsequent ecclesiastical developments, remarking, for example, with reference to the Reformation (not, however, expressly named) and to subsequent purifications and renewals, that "by the force of its own principles, it [Christianity] has, in a great measure, recovered itself from the deplorable state into which it had sunk."¹⁸ And he adduced this purification and renewal in his own age (and circle) as "an additional evidence of its truth and importance," and "a sure prospect that, in due time, it will [everywhere] purge itself from every thing that has hitherto defiled it."¹⁹ Confident that "the knowledge we now have of those corruptions and of the causes which produced them" would "effectually prevent a relapse," Priestley considered Christians in his day "as in a better situation than that of the primitive Christians, as theirs may be compared to that of Adam in Paradise, [the untempted Adam having been] innocent, indeed, but without the knowledge of evil, and therefore insecure."²⁰ And there, looking forward to "the certain, if not speedy, downfall . . . of every power, temporal or spiritual, that opposes itself to the kingdom of God and of Christ," he saw, in 1790, amid the prophetic signs of a new era "that there is now one country [the United States, whose cause he had early bespoken] in the world, and one of growing extent and importance, in which Christianity subsists without any alliance with the state."²¹ At the time of this dedication of the first

wo volumes of his *History*, little did Priestley know that, because of his support of the French Revolution (including his spirited reply to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*), he would be riotously driven out of his church and home in Birmingham, that his library and laboratory would be largely destroyed (Bastille Day, 1791), and that he himself would take sail on April 7, 1794, for those United States he so much admired.

A. The American Stimulus to the Completion of the *History*

Priestley had been preceded on his way to America by his son Joseph. After arriving in New York amid a clamor of welcome, he made his way to Philadelphia. His destination was Northumberland, at the main fork in the Susquehanna, where the scientist-agitator-adventurer Thomas Cooper (1759-1839) had at the head of a small company, including the Priestleys, contracted for 700,000 acres for the settlement of English "friends of liberty."²² Toward his same region Priestley's friend and great admirer, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, had also looked longingly, and Robert Southey had also shared the dream of a Pantisocracy on the banks of the same river.²³

Well before his own house was built among the hundred houses of the village, Priestley was thinking about the continuation of his *History* and the assembling of a library²⁴ in the wilderness sufficient for the purpose. One may follow the evolution of his principal publication in America, the *History*, in the extensive correspondence which survives, notably with two British Unitarian ministers who were the main suppliers of a constant flow of boxes and parcels from across the sea: Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808), minister from 1774 of the London chapel which Priestley and others had helped fit out in Essex House, Essex Street Strand, with its Unitarian liturgy adapted from that of the Book of Common Prayer; and Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), bachelor resident tutor of divinity at Hackney College in London where Priestley had also taught and (after the dissolution of the college) Priestley's successor in the Unitarian chapel (Gravel Pit) in the same place (1794-1805). In his very first letter to Belsham from Northumberland, August 27, 1794, Priestley expressed the hope that "a college of the most liberal principles" might soon be established on the banks of the Susquehanna, a river whose banks he described as fully as pleasant as the woods around Hackney; and he then propounded his intention to continue his *Church History*.²⁵ To Lindsey he wrote more specifically on October 16:

I hope to do as much as I ever have done. In the meantime, I am not idle. I have some books, and every day do something towards the continuation of my *Church History*. I shall finish the next period, which will carry the *History* to the rise of Mohametanism in about a month, tasking myself every day. My materials will not carry me much further.²⁶

In Birmingham Priestley had carried his narrative through thirteen periods, the last being from before the Council of Ephesus in 431 to the fall of the Western Empire in 475/6. It was thus on Period XIV, 475-622, of the still incompletely projected *History* on which he was at work in the clearing. In this volume were sections for example, on surviving Arianism, on monks (with whom in the wilderness he was feeling a certain kinship),²⁷ and on the state of heathenism, Judaism, and various Christian sects. Continuous attention to other religions than the Christian, which would characterize his *History* to its completion, was prompted in part by Priestley's interest in the moral superiority of Christianity and his mounting concern to defend Christianity against Deism and infidelity, and in part also by his interest in God's providential care manifest in the piety and religiosity of people everywhere. He was, furthermore, particularly appreciative not only of scriptural but of post-biblical Judaism. His interest in Christian missions and in the spread of Christianity in far-off places like Ethiopia and India, Greenland and China, the Americas (Catholic and Protestant) and Russia (he owned a Russian catechism) was integral to his premillennialist convictions.

In his periodization of church history Priestley displayed some originality, although he was expressly dependent upon four major general historians: the Gallican Claude Fleury (1640-1725), who wrote his eloquent *Histoire ecclésiastique* in twenty volumes (to 1414), to be continued in sixteen more volumes (to 1594) by J. C. Fabre (Paris, 1691-1720; 1726-1727); the Helmstedt and Göttingen theologian Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1694-1755), whose *Insti-
tutiones historiae ecclesiasticae et recentioris* (1726) had been translated into English by a Scotch divine, S. C. Ustick, who worked in Holland and published the six-volume translation in Philadelphia about the time Priestley was at work on his; the Pietist-Rationalist professor, Johann Salomo Semler of Halle (1725-1791), who wrote *Historiae ecclesiasticae selecta capita*, three volumes to the Reformation (Halle, 1761-69); and Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), who published *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in six volumes.

(1776-83). Priestley found that Fleury was "the most elaborate, and at the same time the most faithful of all general ecclesiastical historians" whose monumental work "contained all the facts in the order in which they took place" but, however admirable, in too much detail to enable the ordinary reader to grasp the whole; and accordingly Priestley was content "with abridging and re-arranging his materials, with my own reflections and colouring."²⁸ With Mosheim he became increasingly dissatisfied, finding that an "artificial and unnatural" division of Christian history into centuries (in the tradition of the Magdeburg Centuriator, Matthias Illyricus Flacius) "separates the prosperous from the calamitous events, which ought to be related in their natural connection."²⁹ He found also that Mosheim, as a theologian, wrote without that particularity which would make martyrs, for example, the occasion for edification and renewed devotion in the life of the reader. Of Semler's *Historia* Priestley wrote to Lindsey that it "is, certainly, a very good book, but too concise and systematic, and not sufficiently Unitarian. The method, too, is more proper for teaching than reading."³⁰ Against Gibbon, Priestley wished so to recount the progress of Christianity as "to supply an answer to his artful insinuations."³¹ More than anything else, Priestley's *History* was an anti-Deistic apology in the form of a history. It begins on its title page with an appropriate sentence in Greek from Eusebius of Caesarea, the father of church history. Priestley acknowledged that he was a generalist and that for the periods after the Fathers he was largely concerned with compressing secondary annals into readable and edifying form. He attached some importance, however, to his selections of representative detail, becoming in certain recitals "very particular."³²

Although Priestley during his first fall and winter in Northumberland had not yet projected an extension of his *History* that would bring him to his final period, XXIV, "From the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes . . . to the Present time A.D. 1802," the factors and considerations that would press him forward to that end become clear from his extensive correspondence and his two American prefaces.³³

As there were four major historians upon whom he was drawing in varying degrees from the inception of the work, so, as it happens, there were four motivations of which he became aware in Northumberland as he continued the *History* up to his own day: (1) to occupy himself usefully in his isolation; (2) to chronicle dispassionately and clearly the corruptions and self-purifications of Christian-

ity as a means of encouragement for the true Christians and as defense against detractors; (3) to draw attention, as occasion afforded, to the good news of Jesus as the Christ in assuring the eventual resurrection of the soul with the body; and (4) prophetically to interpret his own age.

The first motivation is frequently stated in the correspondence and the Preface. Priestley remarked that history was especially important to a man who, approaching the close of life, finds himself becoming reflective.

As for the second, the apologetic motivation, the extent of infidelity in the Republic and notably in rustic Northumberland and in Philadelphia, the provisional capital of the young Republic, distressed him deeply.³⁴ More and more he thought of his expanding *History* as that clarification of pure (Unitarian) Christianity and that faithful and unbiased chronicling of both the aberrations and the self-purifications of Christianity that would commend it to the would-be faithful and inhibit further attack upon it from the quarters of infidels and Deists.

Priestley's interest in the Jews was at once philanthropic, philosophical, and eschatological. He held that their perhaps imminent return to Palestine was a prerequisite of the millennium. Throughout his *History* Priestley wove in references to the Jews, drawn largely from the nine-volume *Histoire des Juifs, depuis Jésus-Christ jusqu'à présent*³⁵ by the Huguenot pastor of Rouen—then in the Hague—Jacques de Beauval Basnage (1653-1723).³⁶ Further importance of the Jews in Priestley's religious thought lay in the fact that their revealed Scriptures, with the Decalogue, constituted the essence and model of what he, with the men of his age of Enlightenment, called "Nature," and for which he as a "Philosopher" (natural scientist) had a special interest.

As for the third motivation, one cannot overemphasize the extent to which Priestley, the philosophical determinist (necessitarian) and scientific materialist, found the good news of Scriptures in the promise of a perhaps imminent second advent of Christ and a general resurrection of the dead. Following the Socinian line, Priestley held that the soul dies with the body. But his abiding comfort, as one senses in his correspondence where he reflected on the death, first of his younger son, and then of his wife, was that God the Father in the resurrection of his adoptive Son Jesus confirmed his intention similarly to re-create by resurrection all human beings, *soul* and body, chastizing them for a season according to their failings in

respect to the revealed code of righteous conduct and then assigning them all their appropriate places in the eschatological realm, pictured by Priestley as indeed a new heaven and a new earth. But this realm for Priestley was not so different but what he, the scientist, might, in the company of loved ones lost awhile, reasonably pursue further inquiries into the marvels of God's mighty works. Priestley was a premillennialist from early in his theological career, coming to believe during his American sojourn in a *personal* return of Jesus before the millennium. It was also only in America and after association with the Universalist Elhanan Winchester (1751-1797) in Philadelphia that he once again became a convinced Socinian *universalist*. Priestley's matured views represented an unusual development in that seventeenth-century Socinianism had been content with a quite selective resurrection of the elect only.³⁷ At this point it should be underscored that on eschatology the Arminian unitarianism of William Ellery Channing's New England and the Socinian unitarianism of Priestley's circle in England and Pennsylvania were a world apart. The former, together with Deism, perpetuated the IV Lateran-Calvinist conviction as to the immortality of a sensate soul. Priestley was a mortalist universalist! He was fully aware that his unitarian, necessitarian, mortalist, utilitarian theology rendered his account of Christian history different from anything written hitherto:

Being a Unitarian [he said in his American Preface], and all the preceding ecclesiastical historians having been Trinitarians, it was impossible but that I should see many things in a very different light from them. . . .³⁸

Actually, Priestley's narrative is less colored by his confessional pre-dilections than he supposed!

As for the unexpected fourth motivation, prophetism, in the writing of the *History* Priestley as early as August 14, 1796, confided to Belsham: "[T]he striking events in the ecclesiastical history of late years [since the Reformation] are not many, and the gradual progress of things will not require many words to describe. The great events are those we are not looking for."³⁹ His eschatological views were inextricably related with his continuous interest in God's providence for the Jews. Priestley busied himself ever more diligently with his *History*, in the growing conviction that he was indeed writing on the eve of a momentous turn in the history of mankind. *Pari passu* with his writing on the later periods of his *History*, he was also at work on a four-volume *Notes on All the Books of Scripture* (Northumberland, 1803-1804). He was particularly absorbed in the

interpretation of Daniel and Revelation, and constantly asked Lindsey and Belsham, who could not entirely share his eschatological fervor, to supply him with exegetical publications. His correspondence abounds in the latest intelligence from abroad, which he tries to relate to prophecy. It is an anomaly that *A General History of the Christian Church*, written in the wilds of Pennsylvania by a Fellow of the Royal Society in England and a sometime member of the Constituent Assembly of Revolutionary France, was in the end also a muted eschatological treatise and its author a seer who (much more explicitly, to be sure, in his correspondence than in the *History*) was on the alert for every sign that would point, for example, to Napoleon Bonaparte's destruction of the Ottoman Empire as a form of unwitting service to Providence in the restoration of the Jews to their homeland in Palestine. Such restoration he held to be a preparation for the second advent of Christ.

But European that he was, Priestley could not but feel that it was somehow only in the Old World that God was preparing through events for the consummation of history. Only at the very end of his life, as the President to whom he dedicated his *History* purchased Louisiana from the First Consul of imperialist France, did Priestley have an inkling that God might perhaps be preparing America for a global role on the eschatological stage.

Prophetic discernment, the clarification of the gospel of the general resurrection, and the defense of "pure" Christianity from infidelity were, then, the ever more clearly articulated concerns of Priestley as he toiled both to avoid tedium and to complete the major work of his American career.

B. Finishing the *History* in Northumberland

We cannot leave Priestly thus characterized without overhearing some more personal comments he himself made to his many correspondents. His letters tell the story of a world-renowned chemist who looked upon his laboratory in one room of his son's house as primarily a place to get relief from his major assignment as a Unitarian historian of Christianity, and who was eager to build up his library to the level requisite for so engaging a task.

In the correspondence we come across Priestley's first expression of interest in an American writing. It was Increase Mather's *Diatriba de signo filii hominis, et secundo messiae adventu; ubi de modo futurae Judaeorum conversionis . . . disseritur* (Amsterdam, 1682),

which Priestley had bought in Europe and now proposed to translate and extend in the light of current events.⁴⁰

Working along on his *Church History*, he remarked in a letter to Lindsey that he was better off in Northumberland than in Philadelphia, where he would not have been able to put in such long hours, and that at the same time he hoped to guard his family "from the general infection of infidelity" which was present among so many of the new settlers.⁴¹ Priestley suggested another reason why he preferred Northumberland to Philadelphia: "On the whole, I am satisfied that I can never appear at Philadelphia, as a Unitarian minister."⁴² (Later he would learn that he could.) On the day of this letter, May 17, 1795, he had finished writing Period XV, "From the Rise of Mahomatanism to . . . Charlemagne" in shorthand and transcribing it for the press. On the following day, in his letter to Belsham, he complained of the delay in receiving parcels of books and remarked that he was finding the two-volume *Accomplissement des prophéties, ou la délivrance de l'Église* (1686) by the French Calvinist controversialist Pierre Jurieu "in many respects an excellent work."⁴³

By July 1795 Priestley had completed Period XVI, "From 800 to 936," and Period XVII, "To the Conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders." He was telling Lindsey at this time that he was working two or three hours every day in the fields but was at his *History* between five and six in the morning, hoping to have what he then thought of as two more volumes "ready for the press" in addition to the two already published in Birmingham. Concurrently he was preparing "a paper for the Philosophical Society at Philadelphia," a report of a continuation of experiments begun in England and now being carried out in the same room in his son's house, which served as his library. On the side, he was reading *A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times* (1794) by Emanuel Swedenborg's successor in London, Richard Brothers, for whose writings Priestley thanked his English correspondent.⁴⁴ In a letter to Belsham about the same time, he told about his loneliness ("I shall always feel as a stranger") and reported on the progress of his *History*, remarking in passing that he had come to the conclusion that "Antichrist and the beasts, etc., etc., must be visible powers or governments and not [merely] opinions or superstitious practices."⁴⁵ On September 14, 1795, he could report to Lindsey that Northumberland now had everything needed to be the best place in the world for the prosecution of his researches and publication: the village was now incorporated, stage coaches now plied

between it and the capital, a regional market had been fixed there at the confluence of the two branches of the Susquehanna, and a college of which he was the shadow president was under way.⁴⁶ But he still longed "to be the public preacher of Unitarian Christianity."⁴⁷ For the time he could but conduct a simple service every Sunday in his son's home for the larger Priestley family.

By November 9, 1795, Priestley could report to Lindsey that he had completed Period XVIII, "To the Taking of Constantinople, 1204," Period XIX, "To the Termination of the Crusades in 1291," and Period XX, "To the Council of Constance." In connection with the Conciliar age he reported using the *Histoires* of Jacques Lenfant (1661-1728), presumably sent to him by Lindsey: *Pisa* (Amsterdam, 1724), *Constance* (1714), and *Basel* (1731).⁴⁸ In effect, Priestley had now finished what would be Volume I of the American Continuation or Volume III of the whole *General History*. In a letter to the Rev. Radcliffe Scholfield of Birmingham he first announced his intention to "bring the *History* to the present time."⁴⁹ He was convinced of "the importance of the work," and he was determined henceforth to "spare no pains to make it as perfect" as he could.⁵⁰

The day after saying this, his beloved son Harry died of overwork and overexposure. The sorrow of the father and mother and their confidence that they would soon be rejoined to him suffuses several of the letters that follow. In the early spring of 1796, before planting, Priestley was in Philadelphia giving the lectures which were later published as *Evidences of Revealed Religion*. The "greater part of the members of Congress" were in his audience,⁵¹ including Vice-President John Adams.⁵² While in Philadelphia on this and subsequent regular winter and early-spring visits, Priestley made use of "a very learned library" of the capital.⁵³ His mind was ever on his *History*; and from Philadelphia he wrote to Lindsey on May 3 to be so good as to send any book that he should come across "that will throw light on the *History*, near the present time."⁵⁴ When Priestley returned to Northumberland he was able to report to Lindsey on June 12, 1796, that an English printer had just arrived.⁵⁵ The setting up of a press in Northumberland coincided with Priestley's entry upon the writing of the Reformation Era. As this belongs in substance to the second part of this present essay, we shall pass over the correspondence relating to its composition and proceed to the end of the *History*.

Through the autumn, Priestley's days were overcast with a second death, that of his cheerful wife Mary on September 11, 1796. She

had not been able to occupy the house she had planned and helped to build.⁵⁶ A week after her death the grieving husband read in the presence of the assembled Priestley families the *Discourse on the Resurrection and the Future State as Taught by Jesus*,⁵⁷ which he had prepared for delivery in Philadelphia.⁵⁸ The loss of two loved ones within a year of each other confirmed his interest in eschatology. This subject now increasingly suffused his writings, including the *History*.

On April 3, 1797, while in Philadelphia for his second midwinter visit, Priestley was able to list for Lindsey six writings which he had by this time published in America.⁵⁹ At about this time he published an appeal for subscriptions to his forthcoming *Church History* but got only seven supporters, none of them members of the Federal administration in the provisional capital. That John Adams, now President, could not overcome *in public* his reserve about "democratic emigrants" from England, which he had not displayed when in Priestley's audience, deeply grieved the Unitarian divine.⁶⁰ He even considered activating his French citizenship and leaving for France, then under the Directory (1795-99). Contact with Bishop William White at Christ Church, whom Priestley found, along with other Episcopalians, "the most liberal" of Christians in Philadelphia, assuaged his sense of not belonging in America.⁶¹ Besides his disappointment at being almost ostracized by the leading Federalist—with whom culturally and even religiously he had so much in common—Priestley had become aware "that at present my character as a philosopher [natural scientist] is under a cloud [on the phlogiston theory, etc.]". He was confident, however, that everything would soon "be cleared up, and then . . . my character, as a theologian, will gain in consequence."⁶²

Working hard all summer and early autumn, Priestley reported triumphantly to Lindsey on November 16, 1797, that he had completed his *History* "brought down to the present" and ready for the press.⁶³ Besides the unit on the Reformation Era he had completed Period XXIII, "From the Conclusion of the Council of Trent to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," and Period XXIV, "From 1685 to 1797 [as finally published: 1802]."

He said in the same letter that he was now collecting materials which would indeed be promptly printed in Northumberland as *A Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos and other Ancient Nations* (1797). He considered the Jews morally superior to the Hindus, for he considered their Bible as an embodi-

ment of the laws of nature and a special revelation of nature's God. Although Priestley would enlarge this work and turn also to other matters (even medicine!) he was not yet really finished with his *History*.

Another box of books arrived from his London supplier. It included Pierre Bayle's *General Dictionary, Historical and Critical*, translated in ten volumes by John Bernard *et al.* (London, 1734-41). With this quarry of data Priestley was encouraged to go through his *History*, fitting in new pieces of information and polishing what he had composed. He was also prepared to say that of three "college libraries" he had seen thus far in America, his was now "three times more valuable than all."⁶⁴ Presently, in correspondence, he referred to his work, under constant revision as the first "Unitarian Church History," remarking that such a work was of more importance to the cause than a Unitarian commentary on Scripture, presumably because a rational study of Scripture could not but lead to a Unitarian point of view.⁶⁵

His universalist, Socinian, necessitarian, and materialist Unitarianism was, however, ever more distinctively his own, as muted comments from Lindsey and Belsham (reflected in the ongoing correspondence) indicate. From Northumberland the renowned Fellow of the Royal Society, citizen of France, and associate at tea or dinner of Benjamin Franklin,⁶⁶ George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, wrote fervidly to Belsham on June 5, 1798, with reference to the expansion of France:

I fully expect the personal appearance of Jesus . . . ; but this will hardly be before the restoration of the Jews. . . . The Turkish empire must fall, before that event. . . . You will, probably, think me a visionary and an enthusiast, but I have pleased myself much of late thinking that Jesus has a proper sphere of action relating to his church at present. Consider . . . Rev. 2:5,22; 3:10; John [21:22f.]. Angels may be men in the same state with him, and occasionally visible. We do not see them, but they see us, and have more to do than we are aware of. Jesus is no doubt living and on the earth and cannot be unemployed. . . .⁶⁷

Later, that autumn in fact, after yellow fever had in Philadelphia felled a number of his acquaintances and with reference to Napoleon's march to Alexandria, Priestley wrote apocalyptically:

Pestilences and earthquakes, as well as war, are to precede the second coming of Christ. I consider the Millennium the day or season of judgment, and the coming of Christ is to be visible, and to precede this. But the Jews must first be restored to their own country, and

there is some appearance of this great work being in agitation.

No period since that of our Saviour has been of so much importance as the present; and it is evident that the state of things is in a rapid motion. . . . I long to be nearer the centre of motion, and to be doing something in my way, more than I can here.⁶⁸

In this prophetic mood Priestley wrote to the Rev. Dr. Joshua Toulmin in Taunton, England, commenting on the division between the north and the slave-holding south and anticipating a civil war which might be averted by an "amicable separation now" (which he favored).⁶⁹ And then with bated breath he wrote to Dr. Benjamin Rush in Philadelphia, August 8, 1799, as though the famous physician were as up on premillennialist Danielic prophecy as he himself: "I expect the downfall of all the states represented by the ten toes in the image of Nebuchadnezzar, and the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel before the present war is over."⁷⁰

The President-elect, Thomas Jefferson, wrote to Priestley in a different mood from Philadelphia, January 18, 1800, thanking him for pamphlets sent, deplored the way so great a scholar and libertarian had been grazed by the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts (1798) under the previous (Adams) administration, and asking for Priestley's direct involvement in the "broad & liberal & *modern*" university he was projecting.⁷¹ Understanding and attention from so high and congenial a personage inevitably influenced Priestley as he was considering to whom in due course he should dedicate his *History*. But although the President-elect praised him, Priestley was not entirely sure that Jefferson was a Christian, but he hoped that he might prove to be a Unitarian Christian.

In the fall of the year 1800 Priestley was able to organize a Unitarian church which met in a schoolhouse and which eventually had up to forty attendants.⁷² His interest in prophecy will have surely found as prominent a place in his preaching there as in his correspondence, where he remarks that the events around the year 1800 "are of peculiar magnitude compared with any preceding ones since the writing of the Revelation."⁷³

Priestley was interested in Christian missions in general and particularly in the Unitarian mission in America, in Britain, and in France under the expansionist Directory. On one of his winter trips to Philadelphia he purchased the twenty-six volumes of Jesuit missionary documents, *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (Paris, 1703-1774), and over the summer and into the fall he managed to read almost all of them. He was fascinated to be able to bring some

there can be no doubt but that truth will finally prevail, and establish itself by its own evidence."

In the Conclusion to the *History* Priestley resumed this theme in the light of his six-volume recital. Holding that Christianity was now in the process of being freed of its corruptions, with little to be found in it "that any unbeliever, any Jew, or Mahometan, can reasonably object to," Priestley made a prediction shared (but with a different sense as to the essence of rational Christianity) by Jefferson:

And since whatever is true and right will finally prevail, that is, when sufficient time has been given to the exhibition of it, rational Christianity will, in due time, be the religion of the whole world. In the prophetic language of our Saviour, he will draw all men unto him.⁸⁶

As for Muslim lands, Priestley felt that "the delusion of that system will disappear, like a fog before the sun." As for the Jews, however, he imagined that the rational purification of Christianity would probably not sufficiently commend it to them "without the personal appearance of Jesus" and "this after their restoration to their own country." As for skeptics and unbelievers on the soil of old Christendom, including Deists, Priestley would first wish to acknowledge the obligation of true Christians to them for their having excited the attention of believers to manifold corruptions and doctrinal aberrations and for having thereby induced Christians to reform themselves and their institutions. And he would not wish to have concealed in his *History*, now terminated, the fact that persecution by unbelievers or by nominal Christians had ever and again restored to centrality the essential traits of the Christian way of life before the resurrection, namely, "the genuine, the amiable, and exalted spirit of Christianity; a spirit of humility, benevolence, and true piety; of patience under reproach, and injuries of every kind; an indifference to the things of this world, and the placing of the heart and affections on the things of another."⁸⁷

Priestley personally supervised the setting of the type of his *History* and read the proof produced by printer Andrew Kennedy, finishing the index in April 1803.⁸⁸ As he was sending out his *History* and awaiting responses, especially from England, Priestley reflected both on the defeat of General Charles Leclerc at the hands of the British Navy in league with the lieutenants of the exiled Toussaint, and on the impending establishment of an independent Haiti. Reversing an earlier judgment on the revolt of the blacks, he now wrote:

"It may be the manner in which Divine Providence is preparing for the emancipation of the negroes in this part of the world."⁸⁹ Then turning to events nearer home and with reference to the Louisiana Purchase—consummated in the same year that he finished printing his *History* and by the President to whom he had dedicated that *History*—Priestley tried to descry the hand of the Almighty: "Had it [Louisiana] remained in the possession of France, it would no doubt have been taken from them by the English, and they would have completely enclosed all the United States to the west. . . . So much for politics. It will now, however, become interesting to us theologians who are read in prophecy."⁹⁰

Well versed in prophecy as he was, Priestley had already in his preface to the *History* on the eve of the Fourth of July, 1802, made specific his hope as a Unitarian sojourner in the New Republic:

It will be happy if temperate and just reflections on the subjects of ecclesiastical history should teach us . . . candour . . . and at the same time lead us to admire the plan of Divine Providence in conducting men by due degrees from error to truth, and from vice to virtue. The view of past events ought also to make us thankful that we live in an age in which we see the gradual diffusion of intellectual light, and a better aspect of things in a moral respect than has ever appeared in the world before. It is a promise of greater improvement in succeeding ages, and of the fulfilment of the prophecies which announce a state of great and permanent felicity in the *latter days* of the world, when *nation shall not lift sword against nation*, when *men shall learn war no more*, and when the whole earth *shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord*.⁹¹

Priestley was growing weaker and in his correspondence frequently alluded to his impending death, although he worked on his unfinished papers and dictated alterations in his texts up to the end. His last letter, January 16, 1804, was appropriately directed to Lindsey, rejoicing in the news in the "public papers" that the ship which he knew to be carrying the last of the six volumes of his *History* had reached London. Lindsey, and with him Belsham, could now rejoice in the completion of the first comprehensive ecclesiastical history to be written and published in the New World, an enterprise which would not have been possible without their continuous efforts in assembling and sending boxes of books and encouraging letters.⁹² Interestingly, the last letter directed to Dr. Priestley himself was dated January 29, 1804, from President Jefferson in Washington,⁹³ thanking him for a copy of his *Harmony of the Evangelists*,⁹⁴ which inspired the President to complete his own Harmony in his own way

that very same year.⁹⁵ It is quite possible that the scientist-divine never received this formal benediction from the President. Dr. Joseph Priestley died February 6, 1804, in the presence of his family and after prayers with each of his grandchildren.

II. LUTHER'S REFORMATION IN THE GENERAL HISTORY

We have reached the point in our understanding of the growth, over a dozen years, of the six-volume *History* (Birmingham, 1790—Northumberland 1803) and of the motivations of its author, to be now somewhat interested in evaluating Joseph Priestley as an historian on the basis of a selected period. No doubt the Socinian biblicist, anti-Deistic apologist for rational Christianity, and "philosophical" prophet would have felt more comfortable were posterity to give closer scrutiny either to his treatment of the apostolic and patristic periods in the *History* or to his final period and concluding prognosis. A glance at the *Catalogue* of his Northumberland library (sold in 1816) reveals, for example, that Priestley had the complete *opera* in Greek and Latin of a large number of Ante-Nicene, Nicene, Post-Nicene, and even Byzantine and scholastic writers. And even for the sixteenth century and beyond he was well supplied with Erasmian, Calvinist, Socinian, Anglican, Tridentine, Jansenist, and Jesuit works, including the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*, the *Storia d'Italia* in twenty volumes (1537-1540) by Francesco Guicciardini, and the French translation of Paolo Sarpi on Trent. But Priestley did not possess a single work of any sixteenth-century Lutheran in Latin or German or in French or English translation! The want of such material in his extraordinarily rich library is itself a datum of English-American intellectual history at the end of the eighteenth century.

In the roughly contemporaneous *History of the Church of Christ* in five volumes (London, 1794-1809) by the Milner brothers, Joseph (1744-1797) and Isaac (1750-1820), both Evangelical Anglican clergymen, there was, it should be said, relatively much more attention given to Luther than in Priestley. The Milners also displayed a greater readiness to use the Wittenberg *Opera* of Luther and other primary sources. Only one year separates Priestley's Volume V (1802), which was largely devoted to the Reformation as a whole, and Isaac Milner's Volume IV (1803), which was largely devoted just to Luther himself.⁹⁶ Yet the American and the English

volumes belong to different centuries. The Milner volume was the work of two Evangelical authors who, in old Northumberland under the influence of John Wesley's testimony, regarded Luther as the fountainhead of true piety, while the corresponding Priestley volume was brought together in the isolation of a new and diminutive frontier Northumberland by a Socinian of polyhistorical interests who could regard Luther only as an important but not as a paradigmatic figure in the ever-accelerating purification of Christianity which is effectuated as mankind hastens toward imminent restitution of Paradise. As far back as 1768 Priestley had written: "[W]hatever was the beginning of this world, the end will be glorious and paradaical beyond what our imagination can now conceive."⁹⁷ Thus, though Priestley has less on Luther than the Evangelical Anglican Milner and also than the magisterial Scottish historian William Robertson in his *History of Charles the Fifth* (3 vols.; London, 1769), nevertheless it is a matter of special interest how an English Socinian and notable natural scientist of that same age of Enlightenment, writing from the perspective of Pennsylvania under the first presidencies of the new American Republic, would view the Reformation, and Luther in particular.

At the outset one must recall that while Priestley read German and, of course, what he called "German Latin," his writings do not reveal that he read much of Luther directly. Only at one point in his correspondence does he indicate that he must have read something of Luther, remarking with respect to his and other important theological works that they were necessarily often "half controversial and half practical or devotional."⁹⁸

As we observed in Part I, Priestley was working on the last three periods of his *History* between June 12, 1797, when he reported the arrival of an English printer in Northumberland, and November 16, 1797, when he reported the completion of the *History* "brought down to the present." We need not try to establish more exactly the dates for his composition of Period XXII, "From the Beginning of the Reformation in Germany, A.D. 1517, to the Conclusion of the Council of Trent, A.D. 1563." Doubtless he had already some things done toward that Period before coming to it; and we know that, with the postponement of the publication in the effort to secure subscriptions, he found occasion to enrich and reorder the whole *History* in the light of his continuous reading. But Period XXII, constituting virtually the whole of Volume V (pp. 135-438) of the whole *History*,⁹⁹ may be dated Northumberland 1797, making it the oldest account of

Luther of any length and of his Reformation *written* in the New World.

This precision in dating and characterizing Priestley's work on the Reformation has some point, in that there were American editions of two British works containing material on Luther republished in Philadelphia about this time: the masterful *History of the Reign of Charles the Fifth* in three volumes (London, 1769) by the Edinburgh divine and historian William Robertson (1721-1793), which, by Eastern seaboard subscription, was reprinted in Philadelphia in 1770,¹⁰⁰ and Luther's *Commentary on Galatians* [of 1531/35], as first Englished in 1575, to which was prefixed in ten pages "An Account of the Life of the Author," and reprinted in Philadelphia in 1801 by Robert Aitken, a Scottish bookseller.¹⁰¹ Our otherwise omnivorous bibliophile does not appear to have owned or used either Philadelphia printing.¹⁰² Nor does he appear to have made use of the biography of Luther in the *Biographia Evangelica*, four volumes (London, 1779-86) by Erasmus Middleton (1739-1805).¹⁰³

Priestley's presentation in the *History* was not, in any case, a biography. This first account of Luther written in America is a straightforward historical narrative in which the Reformer appears prominently on the stage but with his resonant voice muted and some of his motions obscured by the distance between him and the writer. There is, however, almost nothing in the delineation that would suggest the confessional preference of the Socinian-Unitarian narrator, who here more than in any other section of his *History* makes vivid use of a great deal of direct quotations from his principals.

For the Reformation period Priestley was primarily dependent, apart from the four historians cited in Part I,¹⁰⁴ upon Johannes Sleidanus (Schleiden, 1506—Strasbourg, 1556) and the pastor of the French church in Berlin, Isaac de Beausobre (Paris, 1659—Berlin, 1738). Sleidanus, a jurist and annalist published his *De statu religionis et Republicae Carolo V Caesare commentarii* in two volumes (Strasbourg, 1555). Beausobre, a Huguenot exile appointed 1694 as chaplain to Frederick III, Elector of Brandenburg, wrote *Histoire de la Réforme ou origine et progrès du Luthéranisme dans l'Empire de 1516 à 1536* in four volumes (Berlin, 1785-86). "I am much interested in the history of Luther, as written by Beausobre," Priestley wrote to Belsham;¹⁰⁵ and he cites him several times in the exposition of the period. "Beausobre is far more satisfactory than Sleidan," he had written earlier to Lindsey.¹⁰⁶

Around the central action in Germany Priestley grouped the

reforms in other lands, recounted in much briefer compass. For England Priestley used the three-volume work of Bishop Gilbert Burnet, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England* (1681, 1683, 1715); for the Netherlands he used Geeraert Brandt (1671-1704), *Historie du reformatie* (4 vols.; London, 1720); for France, the work of the Gallican Louis Ellies Dupin, *Histoire de l'Église* (1712) (4 vols.; London, 1715-16), and Pastor Etienne-Abel Laval of London, *Histoire abrégée de la Reformation et des Églises réformées de France* (3 vols. in trans.; London, 1737); for Switzerland, Abraham Ruchat of Lausanne, *Histoire de la reformation en Suisse* (6 vols.; Geneva, 1727-28); for Poland and Hungary, Stanislas Lubieniecki, *Historia Reformationis Polonicae* (Amsterdam, 1635);¹⁰⁷ for Bohemia, David Crantz, *History of the [Bohemian] Brethren*, translated by Benjamin La Trobe (London, 1780); and for Italy, to which he gave attention second only to Germany, the writings, some only in Italian, of the Neapolitan Pietro Giannone (d. 1748) and William Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo di Medici* (1796).

There is some significance in the fact that Priestley's first mention of Luther in his *History* is at the end of his recital of the failures of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) where he writes: "The great business of reformation was still left in nearly the same state in which it had been at the Council of Constance. . . . But what the church would not do for itself, the providence of God was preparing the means of doing in a much more effectual manner, by the instrumentality of Martin Luther, who was about this very time beginning to declaim against the doctrine of indulgence."¹⁰⁸ Priestley perceived a close connection between the system of indulgences and a decree of Lateran V on the philosophical demonstrability of the natural immortality of the soul. On no point of theology did Priestley feel closer affinity with Luther than on the doctrine of the sleep of the soul (*Seelenschlaff*), disparagingly called *psychopannychism* by John Calvin and *mortalism* by certain Anglicans under Socinian influence. Already in *An History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (Birmingham, 1782) with the help of Dr. Edmund Law (d. 1787), bishop of Carlisle, and Francis Blackburne (d. 1787)—the Lockean archdeacon of Cleveland and rector of Richmond (Yorkshire)—Priestley had drawn the connection between Luther and his own Socinian convictions concerning the provisional death of the soul.

Archdeacon Blackburne had traced the history of mortalism, of which he was a proponent, in his ample (despite the title) *A Short Historical View of the Controversy concerning an intermediate state*

and the separate existence of the soul between death and the General Resurrection, deduced from the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation, to the present time (York, 1765). There he had shown that Luther was a mortalist and in an appendix, gladly and resourcefully substantiated, against the incredulous Pierre Bayle (and an evasive Lutheran informant), a “charge” of Jacques Davy Cardinal Duperon (d. 1618) that “Luther held that the soul died with the body.”¹⁰⁹ In fact, Blackburne made it very clear that Matthew Tyndale and a whole group of English reformers dependent on Luther had also been mortalists—including John Milton, whom he quoted on his title-page: “Much of the soul they talk but all awry.”

Expressly following Archdeacon Blackburne and Bishop Law, Priestley in *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (London, 1777),¹¹⁰ in *An History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (Birmingham, 1782),¹¹¹ and in the *General Church History*, asserted that the “opinion of the natural immortality of the soul had its origin in the heathen philosophy,” that it insinuated itself into the Latin West, becoming “the support of the popish doctrines of purgatory, and the worship of the dead,”¹¹² that it was conciliarily formulated and papally decreed at Lateran V, and that it was rightly repudiated by Luther:

In the defence of his propositions, in 1520, which had been condemned by a bull of Leo X, he [Luther] “ranks the natural immortality, and that the soul is the substantial form of the human body” among “those monstrous opinions to be found in the Roman dung-hills of decretals”; and he afterwards made use of the doctrine of the sleep of the soul—as a confutation of purgatory and saint worship, and continued in that belief to the last moment of his life.¹¹³

On this, for him the almost preeminent meaning of the gospel—namely, the good news that despite the death of the soul with the body, there will be a general resurrection, of which Christ’s own was a revelatory earnest—Priestley regarded Luther as a true reformer not only in the realm of morality and institutions but also *in the realm of doctrine*. Priestley saw Luther as one who preached with intrepid scriptural insight (1) “against the abuse of indulgence only,” then in consequence of meeting opposition (2) “against indulgences themselves,” at length (3) “against the papal power which granted them,” and finally (4) against the pagan philosophical basis for the alleged exercise of papal power over the souls in purgatory.¹¹⁴

But apart from this one doctrine, which for Luther had primarily

an anti-philosophical, scriptural basis but for Priestley himself both a “philosophical” (i.e., scientific or materialist) and a scriptural basis, Priestley presented the view in his *History* that Luther and then Calvin checked “the spirit of reformation”¹¹⁵ and tended to fix in the minds of their contemporaries and successors *as distinctively Protestant* doctrines that were, after all, the views primarily of Augustine on predestination, grace, free will, and righteousness:

[T]he authority of the names of those reformers who did not see this and other great errors, now serves to strengthen and confirm them; for those doctrines of original sin, predestination, atonement, and the divinity of Christ, which deserve to be numbered among the grossest of all errors, are even often distinguished by the appellation of *the doctrines of the Reformation*, merely because they were not reformed by those who have got the name of the reformers. . . .¹¹⁶

Priestley, first when writing his *History of Corruptions* and then in producing his *General History*, had become convinced that not only the Scriptures but also the Greek Fathers were generally not in agreement with Augustine, Luther, or Calvin on the crucial issue of grace, free will, and meritorious effort. It was Priestley’s conjecture that precisely because Luther had been so long an earnest Augustinian friar that as a Reformer he made, among the Fathers, such exclusive use of Augustine in his approach to tradition and scripture. Priestley conceded, however, that this formulation of doctrine was perhaps the only way at the time to release the papal grip on the church, although on the specific issue of meritorious effort Priestley was confessedly in sympathy with the traditional Catholic modification of Augustine:

It [predestination to eternal life without regard to good works, etc.] was never received in the Eastern church, and was much controverted, and held with various modifications, in the Western. . . . [T]he present [Protestant] doctrines of grace, original sin, and predestination, were never maintained in their full extent, till after the reformation by Luther, who was a friar of the order of Austin, had been much attached to his doctrines, and made great use of them in opposing the Popish doctrines of indulgence, founded on that of merit.¹¹⁷

Against the predestinarianism of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, Priestley opposed what he called necessitarianism, which, he curiously argued, was the only way to restore religious responsibility and moral accountability to man in the face of all forms of predestinarianism and to vindicate theologically and metaphysically the all-embracing role of divine providence, which he sensed in nature, his-

tory, and personal life. This he had propounded in 1777 in his *Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated*. Necessitarianism accepted a then current scientific view, first, of the universe as subject to unalterable laws and, second, of man in the universe as also subject to laws and susceptible to "motives" and "principles" structured in his being and thus properly responsive to the "but one will in the whole universe" and largely—though not wholly—removed from occasional providential interventions. Priestly, within this materialist-necessitarian framework, argued both against chance in the universe and against the morally ungrounded predestinarianism of Luther and Calvin. Thus he sought to defend human accountability in an effort to work out salvation in fear and trembling in response to the divine proffer of a code of righteous conduct and the promise of resurrection and vindication. In his necessitarianism or determinism Priestley was dependent upon David Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1749), of which in 1775 he had published an abridged edition under the title *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind on the Principle of the Association of Ideas*, and upon Anthony Collins' *Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Liberty and Necessity* (1714), of which he had prepared a new edition with preface in 1790.

In criticizing Luther (and Calvin) from his necessitarian point of view, Priestley regularly included in the term "atonement" both Christ's action on Calvary and personal justification by faith. He also knew that in Luther faith was distinguished from belief of a truth:

[A]fter the reformation by Luther, we find the doctrine of satisfaction, or atonement for sin by the death of Christ, reduced to a regular system. . . . There can be no doubt but that the principles of this doctrine were the real persuasion of the first reformers; that they considered it as an article of the utmost consequence, and that even the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was only a secondary consideration with respect to it.

Notwithstanding the satisfaction . . . supposed to be made to the justice of God, by the sufferings of Christ, it is evident that there must be some method of appropriating the benefit of these sufferings to individuals; for otherwise all mankind would have an equal claim to it. And since it would favour the doctrine of human merit too much, to suppose that the merit of Christ's sufferings was always applied to persons of a certain character and conduct, advantage was taken of an expression of the apostle Paul, that we are saved by faith alone; interpreting it, as if it was something altogether independent of good works, or even of a good disposition of mind, which always precedes good works, and constitutes whatever merit they have. This application of the merits of Christ was, therefore, said to be made of something to which they gave the name of *faith*,

but at the same time they disclaimed its being either of the nature of a work, or of faith, in the usual sense of the word, viz. the belief of a truth.¹¹⁸

We need scarcely repeat that for Priestley faith was belief in the truth revealed by God through Christ's life, teaching, death, and resurrection—the truth that all men everywhere would likewise be resurrected and that the at-one-ment with God at the end would be the final vindication of the moral life under the providence of God and within the context, not of "arbitrary" predestinarianism, but of accountable and benign necessitarianism!

Since Luther, according to Priestley, had prematurely fixed "the spirit of reformation" in dogmatic molds and had, indeed, raised to dogmatic status what had hitherto been opinion, it was only with muted admiration that the Socinian determinist recounted the course of Luther's reformation. Moreover, his own belief in freedom from political and confessional coercion, expressed early in his career, e.g., with respect to the emancipation of papists in England, was affronted by some of Luther's language and behavior:

Luther had great defects, indeed, and of a very disagreeable kind, especially envy, and dislike of other Reformers. He wished all to follow him, and was angry if they went one step farther. His behaviour to Carlstadt and Zuinglius, etc. is inexcusable.¹¹⁹

Elsewhere he wrote: "Luther had no idea of the impropriety of civil penalties to enforce true religion. He only objected to the putting of heretics to death, but approved of their being confined, as madmen."¹²⁰

But Priestley was also attracted by the personality of Luther. He admired his interest in music, and had some vague impressions about Luther as a composer of both melodies and hymns.¹²¹ He admired Luther's forthrightness and once took Luther as his own model and sanction for "changing his opinions till a very late period of his life."¹²² He admired Luther's steadfastness of purpose, that his moral "authority preserved union among his followers," noting here that Philip Melanchthon "by his meekness and moderation" was unable to maintain the same tranquillity.¹²³ Recognizing that Luther was not only harsh and envious but also replete with "great and good qualities," Priestley did not hesitate to acknowledge in Luther the most important single Christian trait, namely, that he would have been, the occasion presenting itself, "an intrepid martyr."¹²⁴

It will have been noticed that most of our characterizations and quotations from Priestley on Luther are thus far in works other than

his *General History*. This is because in the latter Priestley was rarely disposed to indicate his own sympathies. At one point, however, Priestley indulged in the observation that Luther's action was "more like a Christian" than at another moment (in the prelude to the Marburg Colloquy). He also commented that Luther was "less jealous" than Melanchthon (who was nevertheless disposed to hear the Zwickau prophets out); but in general Priestley saw his task to be the careful delineation of events and factors as they really were, without much personal evaluation. Priestley had a grasp of chronology and geography; he felicitously wove together Reformation developments and Catholic countermeasures from every region from Poland to Scotland, while retaining Germany at the center of his tapestry. The factual accuracy, the proportions, the density of the material and generalization are approximately what one would find in a Reformation narrative of similar scope and pagination today. There might be just a trace more of interest in the economic and social side of things than one would expect in a narrative of Priestley's age. And he was inclined, as throughout the *History*, to suppose that life and thought were actually better than they appear in recorded histories, because the good, the proper, and the common are less frequently noted than the wicked and the exceptional.¹²⁵

Almost none of Priestley's interest in eschatology, determinism, or civil liberty comes out in his presentation when he is dealing with Luther in the debate with John Eck on purgatory, with Luther in debate with Desiderius Erasmus on the will, or with Luther on the coercion of the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists. The only point at which a modern reader might detect a slightly different range of attention to the specific writings of Luther is when Priestley chooses to bring out the points in Luther's *Responsio ad librum Ambrosii Catharinii* (1524), to which he assigns a paragraph of characterization.¹²⁶ Nor would one expect a free churchman to have given so much attention to the Augsburg Confession and to the Council of Trent. Priestley muted Luther's violent counsel in the Peasants' War, holding him to have been "the innocent cause" of raising hopes on the part of the peasants and of ascribing more authority to the princes in his reformation than was appropriate to the time. He distinguished the peaceful, sober, scriptural Anabaptists from the revolutionary Münsterites and from various kinds of "enthusiasts."

Priestley favors the forthright and martyr-minded among his characters to the compromisers and the mediators. Thus he much prefers Luther to Melanchthon, especially during the Augsburg negotiations

of 1530. He finds occasion to give an admiring delineation of character for the "magnanimous" John Frederick of Ernestine Saxony, who lost out to Duke Maurice of Albertine Saxony in secret alliance with the Emperor during the Schmalkaldic War (1546-47) and who suffered "with pious resignation" for his Lutheran faith. But Priestley was also generally favorable to the Emperor in his conflict with the popes, stressing his moral dignity and his earnestness for a conciliar reform that would go back "to primitive antiquity to arrive at the genuine doctrine of Jesus Christ." In the conflict between Luther and Zwingli, Priestley found the latter "more just" on the eucharist. He felt that Luther was unwarranted in his hostility toward the Swiss Reformer and was at pains to stress that Zwingli had already moved far in the direction of reform before he ever heard of Luther. Priestley, after noting that Zwingli was basically opposed to war, sought to vindicate him against his detractors by elaborately detailing Zwingli's purpose as chaplain and his behavior at the fateful battle of Kappel.

At several points in his narrative Priestley noted with regret that the Sacramentarians and the Anabaptists were never "comprehended" in the various peaces of religion—a little as though he was thinking of these groups as German counterparts of the English non-conformists over against the Lutheran-Catholic Establishment.¹²⁷

Priestley recognized that Luther himself clearly never wished to defend religion by force and only reluctantly went along with the policy of the Schmalkald League. When Priestley came to describe the last events in Luther's life, he quoted his final words, then concluded:

Luther, who had always been an advocate for peace and forbearance, died . . . [an] extraordinary man, who had been raised up by God to be a principal instrument in promoting the great and necessary work for reformation. . . .¹²⁸

CONCLUSION

In composing his *General History of the Christian Church* in backwoods Pennsylvania, Priestley was looking at Luther and the Reformation mostly through secondary writings in German-Latin and French or in English translations from those languages. (At one place, indeed, in order to make a point he allowed a phrase of Luther to appear in the original French!)¹²⁹ He did not, however, minimize the centrality of Germany in world history during the period traversed. To the contrary, although all the nations and regions of

Europe and beyond were assigned places throughout his *History* as well as in the Reformation period, Luther's Germany was spread large and substantially on the exiled Englishman's pages. But it was a Germany seen through the eyes of historians almost exclusively in the French, Reformed, and Catholic traditions and as further refracted through the atmosphere of the Enlightenment. But one cannot say that his sixteenth-century scene was bathed in "Socinian moonlight";¹³⁰ for Priestley, though he professed otherwise, did not really allow his confessional convictions to color his narrative or predetermine his selection of materials for the *History*. But, as he said in his Conclusion, he could only grasp Luther as a transitional figure. As a Unitarian he acknowledged the common "obligation" of all Christians "to skeptics and unbelievers for exciting the attention of Christians to the manifold abuses and corruptions of our religion. Without this powerful stimulus we should probably have been little farther advanced at present than the Christian world was in the time of Luther."¹³¹ He confidently (but with his own sober reservation) reported in the same Conclusion (1803) that "a Lutheran minister from Denmark lately told a friend of mine at Paris [presumably J. H. Stone], that having travelled through a great part of Germany, and seen many ministers of his denomination, he did not meet with one that was not a Unitarian, as he himself was."¹³²

Basically, Priestley held that Luther had overemphasized his adherence to ancient Catholicism in order to free Christendom from the grip of papal Catholicism.

Only on one theological point did Priestley know that he had close affinities with Luther: mortalism and faith in the general resurrection of both soul and body. Alas, Priestley, the Socinian apocalyptic and premillennarian, had no inkling of the degree to which Luther also was sustained by an intense eschatological hope and was, like himself, specifically interested in construing the prophecies of Daniel in reference to the great religio-political and military events of the day. For all his effort to get various commentaries on Daniel there is no evidence that Priestley had ever heard of the attempts of either Luther or Melanchthon (*In Danielem prophetam commentarius*, 1543) to apply the prophecy of Daniel to the Turkish threat. Yet again, very much like Luther, Priestley by identifying the papacy with Antichrist was able to distinguish the person from the office with its illicit combination of spiritual and temporal power:

Though I have no doubt [Priestley said in his American Preface to the *History*] of the Papacy being the Antichrist . . . , the character

belongs to the *power*, and by no means to all the *individuals*, who have been possessed of it. Some of the popes, even after the power was most clearly antichristian, . . . were men of excellent characters, truly pious and conscientious, and at least as far from the spirit of persecution as the Protestants.¹³³

Nor did Priestley know of Luther's early hope (through 1523) that by simplifying the gospel he could help commend Christianity once again to the Jews and by their conversion advance toward the day of judgment, a concern near the center of Priestley's philojudaic Unitarian eschatological hope. Nor could the American historian see that Luther's sola fideist predestinarianism functioned in his positive conception of the world and everyman's vocation in it very much as did Priestley's own materialist necessitarianism, which affirmed his to be the best of all possible worlds and which defined the goal of state and church to be "the happiness of the greatest number."¹³⁴ Nor, finally, did Priestley, who was much interested in education, take any note of the role of Luther or, more particularly, of Melanchthon in the history of pedagogy.¹³⁵

Priestley's was the last history of Christianity—and thus also of Protestantism—to be produced in the Enlightenment era. Roughly *pari passu* with his efforts to complete in America his six-volume Unitarian *General History of the Christian Church* (1790-1803) was the Evangelical Anglican *History of the Church of Christ* in five volumes (London, 1794-1809) produced in England by Joseph and Isaac Milner. In their work the fervor of Romantic piety was already evident in the programmatic limitation of its scope to "a succession of pious men in all ages," it being "no contemptible use of such a history as this if it prove that in every age there have been *real* followers of Christ."¹³⁶ Romanticism, with which Priestley was connected only by way of Coleridge and by his interest in German poetry, would make possible an entirely new approach to Germanic history and the English interpretation of Luther, of which the Milner *History* was a harbinger. Priestley's *History* was, in contrast, a comprehensive account of Christian origins and development in the spirit of the Enlightenment and the only general ecclesiastical history by an avowed Socinian on either side of the Atlantic. It was, finally, the first comprehensive history of Christianity composed in the United States.¹³⁷ Its portrait of Luther, while not based on original sources nor subtly drafted, was at least the first sketch of the Reformer in either English or German on American soil.

N O T E S

¹ Since Priestley is primarily remembered as a pioneer chemist, almost nothing has been done on him as an historian, even though it was as an historian that he was nominated Fellow of the Royal Society. In Birmingham in 1788 he published his *Lectures on History and General Policy*, which was reprinted many times in English, eventually in two volumes, and with translations in Dutch (Deventer, 1793) and French (Paris, 1798).

² The only recent lives of Priestley are by Anne Holt, *A Life of Joseph Priestley* (London, 1931) and the fictionalized biography by John Graham Gillam, *The Crucible: the Story of Joseph Priestley, LL.D., F.R.S.* (London, 1954). There is a brief account of him in the introduction to John A. Passmore, *Priestley's Writings on Philosophy, Science, and Politics* (New York/London, 1965), pp. 7-37. (There is a similar recent anthology but without a biographical sketch by Ira V. Brown, *Joseph Priestley: Selections from His Writings* [University Park, Pa., 1962].) The most recent essays on Priestley's thought—apart from his place in the history of science, where more has been done—are Ira V. Brown, "The Development of Priestley's Religion," *Pennsylvania History*, XXIV (1957), 85-100 and Basil Willey, "Joseph Priestley and the Socinian Moonlight," *The Eighteenth Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature* (London, 1961), ch. x. The modern biographies and sketches must all go back to Priestley's own Memoirs and the critical edition of a portion of his writings.

John Towill Rutt (1760-1847), a member of the chapel in Hackney once served by Priestley, edited *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works* (hereafter referred to as *Works*) in 25 volumes (Hackney, England, 1831), dedicating the whole to the "unitarian" Rajah Rammohun Roy, "Father of Modern India," as he was about to leave England. The first volume (in two parts) is entitled *Memoirs and Correspondence, 1733-1787* (hereafter *M & C*). This in turn contains the *Memoirs* of Dr. Joseph Priestley to the Year 1795, written by himself with a Continuation to the time of his decease, written by his son, Joseph Priestley, in two volumes (Northumberland, 1806), supplemented by Rutt and integrated with Priestley's correspondence. These two parts of Volume I of the collected *Works* have also been printed separately as *The Life and Correspondence of Joseph Priestley*, 2 vols. (Hackney, 1831). Henry C. Bolton edited the *Scientific Correspondence of Joseph Priestley* (New York, 1892). Robert E. Schofield drew upon these earlier editions and many other disparate sources in *A Scientific Autobiography of Joseph Priestley (1733-1804): Selected Scientific Correspondence* (Cambridge, 1966).

All the foregoing theological and miscellaneous works and all the other imprints and translations are bibliographically calendared and described by Ronald E. Crook, *A Bibliography of Joseph Priestley*. Library Association Bibliographies, No. 6 (London, 1966), 202 pp. Section 7 lists all secondary works on Priestley to date, except the articles and anthologies given above.

In 1816 Priestley's library as rebuilt in America was put up for sale, for which Thomas Dobson prepared a *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Dr. Joseph Priestley*, containing many very scarce and valuable books (Philadelphia, 1816), the items arranged alphabetically (mostly by authors) under three divisions: [Religion and History], pp. 3-39; Mathematics, Philosophy, etc., pp. 40-55; Miscellaneous, pp. 56-96.

Unpublished papers of Joseph Priestley are preserved in the Archives of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, of which he had been elected a member while in England, 1785.

³ "English Opinion of Luther," *Harvard Theological Review*, X (1917), 129-58.

⁴ "Luther in England [and America]," *The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies* (New York, 1953), ch. ii, 37-55.

⁵ Rupp finds that interest in Luther and renditions of his works in English after the early Tudor period belong to the mid-seventeenth century and the early nineteenth century.

⁶ See the whole delightfully specific letter-journal written from Paris on October 6, 1774. *Memoirs and Correspondence* (henceforth: *M & C*), I, 248 ff.

⁷ Letter to Belsham, Northampton, March 30, 1800; *M & C*, II, 428.

⁸ *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, VI (Malmö, 1948), col. 376.

⁹ Works listed in *Catalogue of Dr. Priestley's Library*, ed. Dobson.

¹⁰ The six volumes, the first two being a second and revised edition, are published in a second/third edition in *Works*, Volumes VIII, IX, X. In this Rutt edition the originally quite spare footnoting is considerably augmented by the diligent and resourceful editor. References will be made to this critical edition unless otherwise stated.

¹¹ For his motivation, as here explained, see *M & C*, I, 116.

¹² *Works*, VIII, 3-6.

¹³ *Works*, VIII, 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁶ "The former part of this history [to 475], I composed altogether from *original* writers. . . ." Preface to the American Continuation, *Works*, IX, 7.

¹⁷ The printed *Catalogue* of Priestley's Northumberland Library has a considerable range of patristic *opera* from Justin Martyr to Gregory Nazianzen; from Tertullian to Gregory the Great.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² On Cooper, see biographies in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Dictionary of American Biography*. On the settlement, see further Priestley's son's remarks, *M & C*, II, 239.

²³ Letter of Coleridge to Southy, September 6, 1794; Lawrence Hanson, *Life of S. T. Coleridge* (London, 1938), p. 52. For Coleridge's grandiloquently sympathetic poem on Priestley's flight from Bristol to Northumberland, see his *Religious Musings* (1794), p. 1.; Willey, *op. cit.*, p. 94. See further Mary Cathryne Park, "Joseph Priestley and the Problem of Pantisocracy," Delaware County Institute of Science, *Proceedings*, XI (1947), pp. 1-60, and Crane Brinton, *The Political Ideas of the English Romantics* (2nd ed.; New York, 1962), pp. 68, 93.

²⁴ The *Catalogue* of this library when it was put up for sale in 1816 by Thomas Dobson contained an extraordinary number of rare books and series of volumes. Cf. note 2 above.

²⁵ *M & C*, II, 272.

²⁶ *M & C*, II, 276.

²⁷ Letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, November 12, 1794; *M & C*, II, 281.

²⁸ Letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, July 12, 1795; *M & C*, II,

311; Preface, *Works*, IX, 8. Besides Fleury, Priestley made extensive use of the Gallican, Louis Ellies Dupin (1657-1719), *Histoire de l'Église* (Paris, 1712; 4 vols., London, 1713) and for chronology he used Jean le Sueur, *Histoire de l'Église et de l'Empire*, continued by B. Pictet (Geneva, 1674-87 / 1713). Cf. Preface, *Works*, IX, 8; *Catalogue*.

²⁹ *Works*, VIII, 7; letter to Lindsey from Northampton, November 9, 1795; *M & C*, II, 319.

³⁰ Northumberland, June 12, 1796; *M & C*, II, 349.

³¹ *Works*, VIII, 7.

³² Stated three times, Preface, *Works*, IX, 9, 10, 11.

³³ The Preface to the American Continuation, dated July 3, 1802, is printed in the critical edition, *Works*, IX, 7-20; the supplementary Preface to the last (the fourth) in the American Continuation, written in 1803, is printed *ibid.*, X, 291 f.

³⁴ In his concern about the local spread of infidelity, and entertaining some fear of deportation under the Alien Act, Priestley published *Letters to the Inhabitants of Northumberland* (Northumberland, 1799).

³⁵ Published Rotterdam, 1706-07.

³⁶ Basnage subtitled his monumental work a "Continuation of Josephus." Priestley used the edition of the Hague, 1718. *Catalogue*.

³⁷ Letter to Belsham from Northampton, November 4, 1796; *M & C*, II, 361. In a different way Priestley as a Necessitarian had held that in the wisdom of God all things tend to "the greatest good of the whole Universe," and accordingly: "No Necessitarian . . . supposes that any of the human race will suffer eternally." *A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity* (1778); *Works*, IV, 63. Ira Brown, "Religion," *loc. cit.*, p. 90. Priestley even held open the possibility that animals might be resurrected to share in the life of bliss: "[T]he great misery to which some of them are exposed in their life, may incline us to think that a merciful and just God will make them some recompense for it hereafter. He is *their* Maker and Father as well as *ours*." *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777), *Works*, III, 383.

³⁸ *Works*, IX, 9.

³⁹ *M & C*, II, 35.

⁴⁰ *M & C*, II, 294.

⁴¹ Northumberland, April 5, 1795; *M & C*, II, 302; May 17, 1795; *ibid.*, p. 303.

⁴² *Ibid.*, II, 306.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, II, 307. Houghton Library has Priestley's marked copy of the English translation of this work.

⁴⁴ Letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, July 12, 1795; *M & C*, II, 311.

⁴⁵ Northumberland, August 3, 1795; *M & C*, II, 313.

⁴⁶ *M & C*, II, 317.

⁴⁷ Letter to Belsham from Northumberland, August 30, 1795; *M & C*, II, 315.

⁴⁸ *M & C*, II, 319. These three works appear in the *Catalogue*.

⁴⁹ Undated letter about December 1795; *M & C*, II, 326.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 326; Letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, December 6, 1795; *M & C*, II, 324.

⁵¹ Letter to Belsham from Philadelphia, March 5, 1796; *M & C*, II, 334.

⁵² Letter to Belsham, April 8; *M & C*, II, 337.

⁵³ See the later reference thereto in a letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, January 18, 1798; *M & C*, II, 392.

⁵⁴ *M & C*, II, 340.

⁵⁵ *M & C*, II, 347.

⁵⁶ For a picture of the house (now a museum) in which the *History* was to be completed, see Brown, "Religion," *loc. cit.*, p. 96. In this house in 1874 the American Chemical Society was formally brought into being; S. A. Goldschmidt, "Birth of the Society," *Journal of Chemical Education*, III (1927).

⁵⁷ Letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, September 19, 1796; *M & C*, II, 354.

⁵⁸ Published in *Works*, XVI, 287.

⁵⁹ *M & C*, II, 374: 1A) *Discourses Relating to the Evidences of Revealed Religion* (Boston, 1795; a second edition of a London imprint), 1B) *Discourses* (Philadelphia and London, 1796), dedicated to John Adams; 2) *Observations on the Increase of Infidelity* (Philadelphia, 3rd ed., 1797); 3) *An Outline of the Evidences of Revealed Religion* (Philadelphia, 1797); 4) *An Address to the Unitarian Congregation at Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1797); 5) *Letters to Mr. [Constantin] Volney [of Ruines]* (Philadelphia, 1797; and 6) *The Case of Poor Emigrants Recommended* (Philadelphia, 1797). The publications are given in the definitive form in which they appear in Crook, *Bibliography*.

⁶⁰ *M & C*, II, 391, 431.

⁶¹ Letter to Belsham from Northumberland, May 29, 1797; *M & C*, II, 397.

⁶² Letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, June 18, 1797; *M & C*, II, 381.

⁶³ *M & C*, II, 388.

⁶⁴ Letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, January 18, 1798; *M & C*, II, 392. The *Catalogue* of 1816 would tend to confirm this judgment.

⁶⁵ Letter to Mr. William Russel of Middletown near Birmingham from Northumberland, March 22, 1798; *M & C*, II, 398. This statement eventually became a phrase in his Preface of 1802. See *supra*, n. 33.

⁶⁶ Priestley's contacts with Franklin had been in England. It was there that Franklin told him about his experiment with the kite, our only record of this famous episode appearing in Priestley's *History and Present State of Electricity* (London, 1767), pp. 171 f.

⁶⁷ *M & C*, II, 401 f. To Lindsey a few days later he clarified his prophetic allusion with reference to the captivity of Pope Pius VI and an anticipated revolt in Turkey, all as prelude to the millennium: "It [France] is, no doubt, the instrument in the hands of Providence of effecting the greatest purposes, and such as they least of all intend."—from Northumberland, June 16, 1798; *M & C*, II, 403.

⁶⁸ From Northumberland, October 25, 1798; *M & C*, II, 408; more on France, Napoleon, and the Jews in the letter to Lindsey, November 1, 1798; *ibid.*, II, 410; and, with special reference to the victory of Admiral Horatio Nelson on the Nile (August 1, 1798) in fulfillment of Isaiah 19: 20-24, letter to Belsham from Northumberland, April 16, 1799; *M & C*, II, 417.

⁶⁹ From Northumberland, January 9, 1799; *M & C*, II, 414.

⁷⁰ *Scientific Correspondence*, ed. Bolton, p. 156.

⁷¹ Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1905), IX, 95-99, supplemented by another, January 27, 1800, stressing languages in the new university. Jefferson and Aaron Burr, both from the same Republican Party, received a tie vote for Presidency in 1800. The tie was broken by the House. Jefferson became President in March 1801.

⁷² Letters of September 25 and October 16, 1800; *M & C*, II, 442 f., 446.

⁷³ Letter to Belsham, Northumberland, March 30, 1800; *M & C*, II, 428. A year later, after finishing William Eton's *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1798), Priestley remarked to Belsham: "It [Turkey] must be near its fall . . . ; I rejoice, hoping that revolution in the East will terminate in the restoration of the Jews [under a French protectorate]." Philadelphia, March 2, 1801; *M & C*, II, 455.

⁷⁴ Letter to Belsham from Northampton, May 14, 1801; *M & C*, II, 461 f.

⁷⁵ From Northumberland, October 24, 1801; *M & C*, II, 471.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Cf. Schofield, *op. cit.*, pp. 289, 361.

⁷⁷ Intercepted correspondence between Stone and Priestley had earlier gotten the latter into some difficulty when it was exploited by the vicious, naturalized Englishman William Cobbett (pen name Peter Porcupine). *Copies of Original Letters Recently Written by Persons in Paris . . . Taken on Board of a Neutral Vessel* (London, 1798).

⁷⁸ From Northumberland, February 19, 1802; *M & C*, II, 475.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Cf. *infra*, n. 89.

⁸⁰ Letter of March 21, 1801; Ford, ed. *Writings*, IX, 217; *M & C*, II, 456.

⁸¹ Ford, ed., *Writings*, IX, 380-82; *M & C*, II, 483-86.

⁸² From Northumberland, July 3, 1802; *M & C*, II, 489.

⁸³ From Northumberland, August 28, 1802; *M & C*, II, 489.

⁸⁴ Letter to Belsham from Northumberland, October 30, 1802; *M & C*, II, 498.

⁸⁵ *Works*, IX, 3.

⁸⁶ *Works*, X, 534.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 540.

⁸⁸ Letter to Lindsey from Northumberland, April 23, 1803; *M & C*, II, 512. On his printer there is a note by Francis G. Burrows, "Early Newspapers of Northumberland County." Northumberland County Historical Society *Proceedings*, III (1931), 56.

⁸⁹ Letter to Belsham from Northumberland, August 6, 1803; *M & C*, II, 515; cf. *supra*, n. 79.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* As Ira Brown observed, premillennialism was not far from utopianism in Priestley, "Religion," *loc. cit.*, p. 98.

⁹¹ *Works*, IX, 17, italicized scriptural phrasings his.

⁹² From Northumberland, January 16, 1804; *M & C*, II, 524.

⁹³ Ford, ed., *Writings*, X, 69-72; *M & C*, II, 524 f.

⁹⁴ Priestley's *Greek Harmony* was published in London, 1777; English, 1780.

⁹⁵ "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, extracted textually from the Gospels in Greek, Latin, French, and English" (Philadelphia, 1804), not printed until 1904 in facsimile.

⁹⁶ And much of vol. V in 1809 is also devoted to Luther. As dean of Carlisle and president of Queen's College, Cambridge, Isaac Milner, the principal author of the Luther volumes, had the library of the University of Cambridge at his disposal.

⁹⁷ *An Essay on the First Principles of Government* (London, 1768), p. 6.

⁹⁸ Letter to Mrs. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Calne, December 20, 1775; *M & C*, I, 284: "If you look into their [the Puritans' *et. al.*] writings you will find them to be, in general, half controversial and half practical, or devotional; as may be exemplified by the writings of Luther, Calvin,

Owen, Howe, Baxter, etc." Priestley may have had a few Luther items in his destroyed Birmingham library, but the *Catalogue* of the Northumberland library sale has not a single Luther entry.

⁹⁹ *Works*, X, 84-543. Rutt's critical edition of 1831 is slightly longer than the edition of 1802-03 because of the considerable amplification of Priestley's bibliographical references. Rutt was a personal acquaintance of Priestley, having aided him after the Birmingham riot. As editor, he came into possession of the whole correspondence of Priestley with Belsham and Lindsey. He sought in vain to encourage Priestley's son in Pennsylvania to share or at least separately publish his father's American correspondence. On the basis of his intimate relation to Priestley, it is possible that Rutt's extensive supplementary notes to the *History* and to other items in the *Works* are based upon what he knew to have been the specific sources employed by Priestley in his composition.

¹⁰⁰ In this American edition the main material on Luther appears in volume ii, pp. 38-58; 75-79, based on original sources including the Jena edition of the *Opera*.

¹⁰¹ Aitken (1734-1807) had been printing and binding in Philadelphia from 1769 and, as a permanent resident, from 1772 on. The *Commentary* with this *Life* was apparently first printed in Chester, England, in 1796 (octavo, 408 pages). In the Philadelphia edition of Aitken we have what may well be the first portrait of Luther printed in America. It is from the original painting presented by the Bohemian Count Rennoff to the Lutheran Chapel in the Savoy. It shows Luther with a bolt of lightning striking in the window back of his head.

¹⁰² He does, to be sure, refer to the *Commentary on the Galatians* of 1519 (in italics) as a familiar title; *Works*, X, 110. But neither it nor Robertson's *Charles V* appears in the *Catalogue*.

¹⁰³ The same reappeared as "A Long Historical Sketch of Luther and His Work," affixed to a posthumous new edition of Luther's Englished *Commentary on Galatians* of 1575 (London, 1807). Priestley was, of course, a score of years too early to have made use of the first major edition of the *Select Works* of Luther by Henry Cole, subtitled "An Offering to the Church of God in Last Days," four volumes (London, 1826).

¹⁰⁴ Fleury, Mosheim, Semler, and Gibbon.

¹⁰⁵ From Northumberland, August 14, 1796; *M & C*, II, 351.

¹⁰⁶ From Birmingham, August 26, 1787; *M & C*, I, 416. Besides Beausobre and Sleidan, Priestley made some use of the Jesuit Louis Maimbourg's *Histoire de Luthéranisme* (Paris, 1680). *Catalogue*.

¹⁰⁷ In the *Catalogue* one finds just about every historical and theological work to date of the Socinian community.

¹⁰⁸ *Works*, X, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Rupp, *op. cit.*, p. 46, n. 2, misinterprets the intention of Blackburne. Of greater note is the fact that Unitarian Earl Morse Wilbur in *A History of Unitarianism (II); in Transylvania, England, and America* (Cambridge, 1952) chose completely to leave out the mortalist and resurrectionist stress of Blackburne; cf. pp. 275-78; 280-82.

¹¹⁰ *Works*, III, 376 f.

¹¹¹ *Works*, V, 228 f.

¹¹² *Disquisition*, p. 31; cf. *Works*, XXV, 381 n.

¹¹³ *Works*, III, 378, citing Blackburne's *Historical Review* (1765 ed.), pp. 15-17.

¹¹⁴ *Works*, V, 325; cf. X, 108.

¹¹⁵ *The Importance and Extent of Free Inquiry in Matters of Religion*: a sermon preached in Birmingham (1785); *Works*, XV, 73.

¹¹⁶ *Importance of Free Inquiry*; *Works*, XV, 73 f.

¹¹⁷ *An Appeal to the Serious and Candid Professors of Christianity* (1770); *Works*, II, 400 f. The same point as to Luther the Austin friar is made in *An History of the Corruption of Christianity*; *Works*, V, 146. For a discussion of Priestley's necessitarianism, see Willey, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-81.

¹¹⁸ *History of Corruptions*; *Works*, V, 146 f.

¹¹⁹ Letter to Lindsey from Birmingham, August 26, 1787; *M & C*, I, 415.

¹²⁰ *History of Corruptions*; *Works*, V, 341.

¹²¹ *Works*, X, 289. Priestley gave more attention to music and liturgy throughout his *History* than one would expect. The *Catalogue* of his Northumberland library contains many *ordines*, rituals, including the *Ordo Romanus* and William Williams, *History of Church Music*.

¹²² *Works*, XVIII, 492.

¹²³ *Works*, X, 345.

¹²⁴ Letter to Lindsey from Birmingham, August 26, 1787; *M & C*, I, 415.

¹²⁵ Preface, *Works*, IX, 4 f.

¹²⁶ *Works*, X, 135.

¹²⁷ *Works*, X, 169 f., 181, 189.

¹²⁸ *Works*, X, 192 f.

¹²⁹ *Works*, X, 136: *aller à cheval*.

¹³⁰ Coleridge, friend and admirer of Priestley, once wrote: "Socinianism moonlight, methodism, a stove. O for some sun to unite heat and light!" *Anima Poetae*. Willey, alluding to Coleridge's phrase, entitles his section "Priestley and the Socinian Moonlight," *op. cit.*, ch. x.

¹³¹ *Works*, X, 534.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 536 f.; *supra*, n. 79.

¹³³ *Works*, IX, 13. For example, here differing from Luther, Priestley largely exculpated Gregory VII Hildebrand who really thought he was "engaged in the defense of the just rights of the church against the powers of this world." *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹³⁴ Jeremy Bentham, the Utilitarian, avowedly owed his famous phrase to Priestley; cf. Brown, "Religion," *loc. cit.*, p. 90.

¹³⁵ Priestley himself wrote most notably on the subject in *An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life* (London, 1765), defending the principle of diversities in the educational system of a country. The nearest he came to the Lutheran tradition was to mention appreciatively Samuel Pufendorf (1632-94), the Lutheran jurist and historian, who propounded the collegial theory of church government, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹³⁶ The Milners' *History* came out in an American edition (5 vols.; Boston, 1806). The programmatic sentence quoted will be found in I, xiii.

¹³⁷ I have not looked at what Robert D. Clemmer might have to say on Priestley's Unitarian historiography in his unpublished University of Pennsylvania Ph.D. thesis (which extends the Enlightenment mood by half a century): "Enlightenment Church History in the United States, 1800-1850" (Philadelphia, 1961).

N.B. After proofreading I learned with satisfaction that Professor Pauck had directed a Union Theological Seminary doctoral thesis by Lloyd Walter Chapin, "The Theology of Joseph Priestley: a Study in Eighteenth-Century Apologetics" (New York, 1967).

N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG ON LUTHER

ERNEST D. NIELSEN

N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG's place in the Christian world is beginning to receive serious attention from scholars outside Denmark. His name is no longer subject to the taboos created by certain pastors and theological professors who once saw in Grundtvig an anti-Lutheran pastor. It is popular today to place Grundtvig in sharp contrast to his contemporary, Soren Kierkegaard. I believe that this confrontation will be fruitful, primarily because the situation and the problems which they faced and sought to resolve are practically identical.¹

In the case of Luther and Grundtvig the task is in some respects more difficult. In the first place, while Grundtvig deliberately wants to maintain for himself a living connection with the past, he does not want to reverse the order but to move *forward*. Therefore, the contemporary situation is a determining factor in any decision-making action. He fully realizes that the problems which face Christianity in his century are different and more difficult to deal with than those which faced the sixteenth-century reformers. The problems are simply not identical. The answers to the problems inherent in eighteenth-century rationalism are not necessarily found by an appeal to the theological position of Martin Luther. The new crisis which he sees facing the church requires a different approach for its solution.

Grundtvig research today is contributing to a clearer distinction between Grundtvig as pastor and Grundtvig as scholar. But this in turn presents a problem. For this research seems to introduce the purely religious term "conversion" into Grundtvig studies at several stages of his development² where normally we would speak about a significant or fundamental change in his views.

Grundtvig's awareness of the peculiar situation which furnishes the background for his reforming zeal, in contrast to the condition which faced Luther, has influenced me in the selection of the material to be presented in this essay.³ Further, I am of the opinion that the distinction between Grundtvig the ordained pastor and historian is valid, especially for the purpose of avoiding the confusion which

he himself vigorously tried to combat.⁴ On the title page of *Den Danske Statskirke*,⁵ Grundtvig quotes II Cor. 3:17 b (AV), "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The way of liberty is his approach both as a preacher and as a scientist.

Perhaps I may conclude this introduction by pointing out that Grundtvig's complete printed and unpublished writings over a period of seventy years would constitute between 120 and 130 large volumes.⁶ There is plenty of material to be explored for anyone who is interested in a serious study of Grundtvig.

THE BACKGROUND: PIETISM AND RATIONALISM

In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the remaining vestiges of the medieval world disappeared. The intellectual revolt reached Denmark by way of Germany. The future seemed to belong to science and scientists rather than to the church and the faithful; doubt was in the ascendancy in many areas of life; critical thinking was applied not only to the fields of philosophy and religion, but also to questions pertaining to institutions: social, religious, and political.

Two movements of this period against which Grundtvig reacts strongly are Pietism and Rationalism. Pietism reached its pinnacle in Denmark between 1735 and 1745. In the popular mind Grundtvig represents the most significant reaction to Pietism. The pietists are a "godly" or "holy" people; the followers of Grundtvig are "happy" Christians. While this strikingly descriptive contrast is an indication of the layman's perceptiveness in seeing a difference between the two movements, it should be pointed out that those pietists whom the layman has in mind are not the eighteenth-century pietists but their nineteenth-century counterparts. Whereas that Pietism in Denmark which reached its pinnacle between 1735 and 1745, was largely in the hands of the clergy,⁷ the revival movement of nineteenth-century Denmark actually fostered lay-preaching.⁸ And yet Pietism's firm hold on the life of the people had already been superseded by Rationalism before Grundtvig began his work.

Rationalism resulted in a cult of human reason which Grundtvig reacts to quite differently from those defenders of the faith who feared a grand attack upon the church. Here Grundtvig charts his own approach. It is well to recognize that in this intellectual crisis Grundtvig, like Luther in his day, is on the side of faith. At no point in his writings pertaining to the intellectual revolt effected by Rationalism, does he ever envision the inevitable collapse of the church. He

is of the same mind as Luther, and he can sing: "Built on the rock the church doth stand."⁹

Grundtvig is completely aware of Rationalism's entrance into the cultural life of Denmark by way of Germany. He knows the contribution which the German theologians have made to the church and to learning. Theological schools of differing thought are not a new phenomenon. What is new and crucial is the shift in the respective position of the conflicting groups—rationalists and supernaturalists, Protestants and Roman Catholics, syncretists and Lutherans. Rationalism, or naturalism—for Grundtvig, the two are practically the same—had risen from an insignificant position in the sixteenth century to one of universal primacy in the eighteenth.

Grundtvig is wise enough, both as a religious thinker and as a learned historian, to know that religion cannot escape critical investigation by those whose task is the pursuit of knowledge. The error into which the Lutheran theologians have fallen is that in order to "protect" the church they have retreated into an "invisible" church, meanwhile forgetting that the church is a faith-society that cannot be held responsible for the theological position of professional theologians. For Grundtvig the faith is unalterable, but theology as a discipline is subject to progressive development and should be accorded all possible freedom.¹⁰ The principal battlefield is the Bible, but Grundtvig does not allow himself to become alarmed by the rationalists and their "rationalizing" of the Bible. The long history of the church shows that learning often has had a salutary effect upon the life of the church. Moreover, the church has not been destroyed by the appearance of books. In fact, books—depending upon their quality, of course—may help to cleanse the church. Regardless of what the rationalistic theologians may say about the Christian sacred writings, it is no crime for the church to possess and use them for the purpose of Christian instruction. Whatever else may be said about the Gospels in regard to their origin and composition, they do confirm the faith of the church. Their testimony to the Christ-faith is trustworthy.

By the 1830's, a truly exciting and creative period for Grundtvig's own development, he takes the position that if the theologians, Protestant and Roman Catholic, who do not believe in the omnipotence of human reason would once learn to distinguish between the faith of the church and the theology of the various schools of thought, then the way would be cleared for removing those partitions between those men of different denominations who possess and share the same unalterable faith.¹¹

Grundtvig is definitely not against Luther. He shares with him the faith of the church, but the circumstances under which he rises to speak *for* the church and its renewal are entirely different from those which Luther faced. Grundtvig begins as a biblicist, but wins the battle by discovering, to speak in the language of form criticism, the gospel behind the Gospels. The church which accepts the truth of *the* faith has something to say not only *to* but *against* those who deny this faith its freedom of action. At the close of our paper we shall return to this subject and point out how Grundtvig envisioned the conditions under which the established church might best serve the interest of *all* citizens, including those outside the establishment and those who oppose it.

I have not tried to make an itemized comparison between Luther and Grundtvig. Although it might be very instructive to compare the two men point by point, I do not think Grundtvig studies are sufficiently advanced among American theologians to warrant such an approach at this time.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARTIN LUTHER

In the first draft of the preface to *Biblical Sermons*, Grundtvig says that the first period of his ministry—from Trinity Sunday, 1811, to St. Stephen's Day, December 26, 1815—has come to a close. He reminds his readers of his public announcement following the sermon at the service on that day:¹² "I shall remain silent. Of what use is it for me to continue to preach? Why shall I repeat what none wants to hear, or how can I continue to build as long as I cannot see that the foundation has been laid?"¹³ Yet, the truth is that Grundtvig's voice reached beyond his native land and found receptive ears in both Norway and Germany. Nevertheless, Grundtvig is right: a five-year period is closing. What is behind him is now "closed" in an even deeper sense. A new chapter lies before him. Whether it will come to fruition in one or ten years is a question which he cannot answer; only He "who begins and completes all things"¹⁴ can supply the answer.

His youthful hope for a national awakening or return to the message of the Bible suffered a setback which cannot be explained exclusively in terms of external factors. His amazingly creative mind was at work developing and shaping the views which eventually were to dominate his thought and life. The words of the prophet Jeremiah, "O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord,"¹⁵ which Grundtvig

places like a motto on the title page of *Biblical Sermons*, were to be fulfilled later, awaiting, in the meantime, the unfolding and chastening of his great genius.

Despite everything, Grundtvig remained deeply grateful throughout life for the evangelical Reformation which we associate with Martin Luther. Every annual observance of the Lutheran Reformation was for him a golden opportunity to remind his fellow Christians that the Reformation event is to be taken seriously and that they should seek anew for the path to renewal in the life of the church. He dealt regularly with the subject of Luther, long before the appearance of any intensive Luther research in his own country. He approached the subject as a poet, as an historian, and as a preacher; he sang, wrote, and spoke about his ideal reformer, Martin Luther.

It is upon the house of the Lord, i.e., the congregation, that the obligation rests to

focus the eye upon the whole, upon the congregation which calls itself the church of Christ, and examine and reflect whether it is evident that it belongs to him . . . such thoughts are particularly apropos on this day when we have come together to give solemn thanks to God who renewed his church through his servant, Martin Luther, who by the grace of God restored the hidden light of the word to its rightful place so as to enlighten all who were in the house. . . . Now that light is surely despised, ridiculed, and extinct. Therefore, it behooves us on this day to ask the sad but great and important question: Do we need a reformation like that in the days of Martin Luther?¹⁶

Circumstances today are more disheartening than in the days of Luther. It is true that no pope prohibits us from reading and studying the Scriptures, but we accomplish the same by rejecting and despising them. The word is not concealed from us in a foreign language, but it is, nonetheless, hidden by the covering of our hearts by the spirit of the world which is so strong among unbelievers. The visions of the prophets are for us like a closed book and sealed letters.¹⁷

Thus Grundtvig stressed the need for a renewal of life in the spirit of the Reformation. A mere celebration of the Reformation anniversary does not suffice. It is true that Christian men and women in the days before the Reformation prayed to the saints, but nineteenth-century man was so self-reliant that he saw no need of divine help at all. Medieval men and women purchased letters of indulgence, but the sophisticated among Grundtvig's contemporaries had no need even of forgiveness.

In regard to the Reformation heritage, it was his position that a

Christian cannot live his own life in his own day and generation merely by reciting the accomplishments of an earlier century. The Christian life involves a struggle against evil in all its diverse manifestations. He sees evil epitomized on the contemporary scene as disdain and unbelief, as coldness and indifference. He points to the prevalent delusion that we are morally right if only we know the list of duties, avoid encroaching upon the rights of others, and keep ourselves within the law of the land.¹⁸ Hence he asks, "What can it possibly benefit us that they have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith, and received the honorable and lasting prize, if we do not fight the same fight and put on the whole armor of God?"¹⁹

It was to be a long time before Grundtvig could address himself more effectively to the contemporary mind. Yet, even in his severe judgment upon the conditions which prevailed in his day, he never lost sight of the meaning of hope in the context of Christian faith and life.

Shall we then give up, despair, and conclude that there is no way of escape? No . . . the Lord will renew his church. . . . Where he will build his church we know not; only this we do know, that he who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, he will also dwell among us with his word of grace.²⁰

Among the learned Lutheran theologians of his day, few were more highly esteemed by Grundtvig than the German scholar, Franz Volkmar Reinhard (1753-1812). In the first instance, Grundtvig probably saw in this great defender of the Lutheran Reformation a man whose own spiritual and intellectual struggles were not unlike his own.²¹ Grundtvig found Reinhard's lectures and sermons, in the city where Luther lived, reminiscent of Luther and Melanchthon themselves. Reinhard's death in the fall of 1812 inspired Grundtvig to write his well-known Luther song: *I Wittenberg i Saksenland*. Secondly, he rewrote his original All Saints' Day sermon for publication, prefacing it with the poem and a tribute to Reinhard: "This great thinker in an age of unbelief had the heart to be a true biblical Christian and the courage to confess the despised faith."²² To his readers Grundtvig suggested that through Reinhard God is saying to us "that we are no longer Lutherans, and that we mock God and his servant by calling ourselves disciples of Luther."²³ The theme of his sermon was: "Why are we called Lutherans?" The objective of the sermon was to explain why, among all the saints, it is the practice of the Church in Denmark to single out on All Saints' Day "the faithful

servant of the Word, the great soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ, Martin Luther.”²⁴

Grundtvig asks some searching questions of those intellectuals who do not want to be called Lutherans. Is it because they are not baptized in the name of Luther, or because Christ, not Luther, died for them? Is it because they reflect upon the life of Luther and conclude “that Luther was a man of frailty who occasionally had to make errors, and did make mistakes in trying to discover the right meaning of the Scriptures, or because of their great solicitude for the reverence of Christ and the authority of the Bible?”²⁵

Grundtvig’s answer is, of course, self-evident. It is the congregation which is the body of Christ; it consists of believers. The pastor’s mission is crucial for the propagation of the faith. If those of his fellow pastors who believe are to remain silent against the attack upon the faith, whence will the next generation turn to obtain pastors who believe? The pastor is called to preach. He is ordained to be a minister of the word, and by his educational preparation for the ministry he should be equipped to interpret the Scriptures. He finds the same motivation for preaching as that which dominated Luther: “I believe, therefore I speak.”

Grundtvig, even in this early stage of his development, related the call to the ministry: firstly, to the divine call and command to be baptized; secondly, to his education in preparation for the ministry; and, thirdly, to his ordination. Grundtvig refused to follow the pietists who in many parts of Denmark rallied around uneducated lay preachers. Neither the mission house nor the lecture hall was for him a satisfactory substitute for pulpit or parish.²⁶

Even as Luther made a point of his doctor’s pledge, so Grundtvig took his stand upon the solemn promise which he had made at the time of his ordination:

In the name of God and with the gracious help of the Holy Spirit, I will . . . keep the vow which I made before God on the day on which I became his ordained servant; I will strive even to the point of death to defend his holy word.²⁷

Thus we see in the young Grundtvig an enthusiastic reformer who wanted to “walk in the footsteps of Luther,” but not under the illusion that this could be done without costly sacrifices.

Luther knew his own frailty and unworthiness; he acknowledged that it was only through Jesus Christ, who strengthened him, that he was enabled with boldness to defy and renounce the world, purify himself from the corruption of the flesh and the spirit, and complete

his sanctification in the fear of the Lord. If we truly were Luther's descendants, we would do his deeds, but we do the very opposite. We follow our own evil desires. We love the world and worldly pleasures—the lust of the eye, the temptations of the flesh, and luxurious living. As long as we do not overtly commit murder, adultery, theft, and fraud, we, like the Pharisee, thank God, and take for granted that we deserve the kingdom of God.²⁸

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS

In 1868 Grundtvig issued in book form a series of twenty-one theological essays, which first appeared in *Kirkelig Samler* between 1855 and 1861. The title of the volume is taken from the first essay, written in 1855 and entitled: "Den kristelige Børnelærdom." I shall refer to this volume as *Christian Fundamentals*. The second edition of *Christian Fundamentals* was issued in 1868, and was followed by a third edition in 1886. The text of the third edition was critically compared with the first edition and in the case of discrepancies which cannot be supposed to represent Grundtvig's own changes, but probably were the result of printing errors or mistakes by the proof-reader, the text of the first edition was used throughout for the third and final edition.²⁹ In this study I am relying entirely upon the third edition of 1883.

Several of the essays in *Christian Fundamentals* throw light on Grundtvig's view of Martin Luther and the Lutheran Reformation. They reveal Grundtvig's undogmatic approach.

In contrast to the "old Lutheran" position Grundtvig asserts, first, that we cannot make the term "Christian Fundamentals" mean the same in every situation. He starts with the assumption that Christ has a church in this world which is not concealed from its members. In the second place he presupposes the validity of the Lutheran Church's position, namely, that it is an authentic component of the church of Christ. Finally he categorically rejects the point of view that Luther had established a conspicuously new church.

That baptism is the only means for entering the church is for Grundtvig something indisputably clear and rooted in our historical knowledge of the origin of Christian worship. The Christian ministry is one. Luther and Grundtvig are both ministers and teachers whose respective ministries are not in any way inferior to the ministry of others. Grundtvig's definition of the Christian has none of the subjective elements of Pietism or the moral concepts of the rationalists. What a human being achieves and accomplishes by becoming a

Christian is the fruit of his reception through baptism into the Christian church. In other words, man as a Christian—or a Christian man—is constantly subject to nurture and growth.

Grundtvig does teach that there is a condition *sine qua non* for entrance by baptism into the church, namely, the renunciation of the world and its ways. For Lutherans all over the world, instruction in the Christian religion naturally raises the question of the place of printed material as the medium of instruction. Here, Grundtvig reveals a deep personal attachment to Luther's *Small Catechism* whenever he nostalgically looks back upon his own catechetical instruction and early years in the ministry. However, in his *Christian Fundamentals* he takes a critical view of the catechism. His criticism is rooted in his awareness of the dynamic interaction which results when ideas confront one another in the development of Christian thought, an interaction seen in various periods of church history. Grundtvig's Christianity is definitely not conceived in terms of anyone's individual opinion—regardless of how eminent a person may be in the opinion of others and regardless of his position. We must not, he contends, confuse any individual interpretation of what Christianity is with the church's own witness as to the nature and function of its mission. In his critique of Luther's *Small Catechism*, Grundtvig takes the position that pedagogically the catechism contains both too much and too little. In other words, he proposes that a better text be prepared for the instruction of youth in that faith which undergirds the life of the church. When he advocates "nothing more, or less" he is not free from the dogmatic approach which he himself otherwise staunchly rejects. Nonetheless, Grundtvig is on solid ground when he is concerned about the church's witness as distinct from the absolutizing of any individual's particular teaching. His own extensive writings actually refute the idea that a text on Christian fundamentals can be reduced to capsule form if it is to serve a genuinely educational and Christian purpose. However, I shall let Grundtvig speak.

Therefore, we must not blindly presuppose that what Martin Luther or any other theologian in the church, many centuries after the days of the apostles, regarded as Christian fundamentals necessarily are so, but we must direct our inquiry to the church, asking about the nature of the foundation which the apostles on behalf of Christ have laid not in a book, but in the church itself, which is an assembly of Christian people.³⁰

I naturally presuppose here that the so-called Lutheran Church into which I have been received through baptism was and is a constituent

part of the church of Christ, which the apostles founded according to Christ's own institutions and upon his behalf—a church which shall continue until the end of the world. Hence, Martin Luther, far from creating a brand new church, was a member of and a faithful servant in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ both prior to and after he separated himself from the Pope in Rome.³¹

In the church of Christ every one must know that baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the only way of reception. The testimony is that this baptism is not by water alone, but by "water and spirit." Consequently, it is not simply a churchly ceremony but a heavenly bath of the new birth whereby the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ grants us the forgiveness of sin, the right to become children of God, and the hope of eternal life. This witness is definitely made at every baptism in the church of Christ, of which Martin Luther was a member and pastor and of which I also am a member and pastor.³²

Therefore, this constitutes without contradiction an important part of this particular church's testimony of what constitutes Christian fundamentals. It is undeniably clear that elementary Christian knowledge must teach us by what manner and means a person becomes a Christian, and what a person gains and enters into by becoming a Christian, that is, through actual reception into the church of Christ.³³

Of all the books that we have read, there probably is none other [than Luther's *Small Catechism*] . . . which reminds us more about the Christian instruction which we have found in connection with baptism in the church of Christ. Yet, we observe also that Luther's catechism, no more than any other book by an individual Christian teacher, even if it were by an apostle, can be compared to the witness and instruction that comes to us through the living voice of the Church.³⁴

It is possible for us, indeed, without obvious self-contradiction to assert that our Christianity, which we derive from and build upon Christ and the church's common, audible, living witness at baptism and the Lord's Supper according to his own institution, does not correspond to the apostolic description of the church. Moreover, Christianity does not possess the spirit and life which the apostolic writings predicate of the Christian gospel if it truly is to be the power of God working salvation for all believers. Because of this Christianity, which obviously is the only one that possibly can correspond to the apostolic example, we do have two great advantages in its defense against our opponents: firstly, we can point to the future as the only final arbiter, and, secondly, we can show that Christianity stands or falls with our ascended Lord Jesus Christ and his church on earth.³⁵

Grundtvig is talking about Christian essentials rather than a system of theology. He was the first Lutheran theologian of the nine-

teenth century to grasp and continuously adhere to the position that the church has a voice, a living voice, a testimony concerning the faith. In a sense, only the church is in a position to declare what constitutes authentic Christianity. The theologian may evaluate and even dispute the testimony; he may deny the truth of Christianity, but if he really wants to contribute to Christian enlightenment he must begin at the beginning. In a remarkable way, Grundtvig is a religious thinker and writer whose whole work reflects a tremendous renewal—not by his early polemical preaching or preoccupation with many contemporary issues, but rather through his profound understanding of the church's own living witness, which he never identifies with man but with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The revival which he was allowed to see in many areas of the church, in education, and in secular life, is directly related to his reforming influence upon the life of his country. Grundtvig's views changed during a long and fruitful life, but his zeal for the continuing reformation of the church never waned.

THE VALIDITY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

Few men in the Lutheran Church have spoken so directly to the question of man, created in the image of God, as N. F. S. Grundtvig. In retrospect, Grundtvig stands in the foreground as a spokesman for a genuine Christian concern with the whole question of man. The centrality which he gives to human life cannot be overemphasized. Creation and the created order of things are basic to his whole understanding of man. The singularly distinguishing mark of man—his ability to communicate—is in Grundtvig's thought the condition of human growth in all of its manifestations. While this view does not depend upon any particular Christian tenet, it is of special significance for any meaningful discussion of the possibility of revelation. Grundtvig concedes that what he is saying about the distinguishing mark of man might well be applied to the pre-Christian era. Nevertheless, the real meaning of the Christian revelation is the Word Incarnate. This event presupposes the tangibility of the human and the divine. Grundtvig flatly rejects the absolute dichotomy which the pietist and orthodox Lutheran theologians of his day made between man as he is by nature and man as the new man. In their opinion, the fundamental difference between the nature of the human and divine was so deep as "to leave any living contact utterly unthinkable."³⁶ Grundtvig tries to overcome the contemporary view

of man, which tended to make the Christian an alien, a stranger, and a pilgrim in this world. Only in a metaphorical sense is the new man a new creature. Indeed, the life of the old man (Adam) and the new man (in Christ) is a life of sharp contrast, but

on the other hand it is the very same person that we are speaking about. . . . Man even in his most unfathomable, poorest, most unclean condition fundamentally shares the same essence as man under the most favorable, most moral, most enlightened condition. . . . In a word, the thief on the cross shared the same human nature as God's only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he cried: "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom!" From him he received the true, the astonishingly effective, the loving answer: "I promise you, today you shall be with me in Paradise."³⁷

For Grundtvig the intrusion of God into the world of man is beyond doubt. Creation and redemption are preempted of their significance for our clear understanding of man by the orthodox Lutheran position on the fall of man. Grundtvig does not take sin lightly, but he asserts that if man were not created in the image of God, it would be impossible to enter into any "genuine and living thought of God, his Spirit, word, and kingdom."³⁸ More particularly,

if Adam's human nature, created in God's image, were destroyed by the fall, neither God nor Adam could have spoken to each other; much less would it have been possible to call Abraham, a descendant of Adam, God's friend, or for God to speak with Moses, also a descendant of Adam, as a man speaks with his fellow man, or for God's Spirit to rest upon those other descendants of Adam, namely, Samuel, David, all the prophets, and John the Baptist. Yes, in such a case, God could neither use human beings as spokesmen for himself nor touch the hearts of men with his voice.³⁹

Our being as man is for Grundtvig grounded in the act of creation. If the fall of man has destroyed the image of God in man, then "there is nothing to be either saved from or to."⁴⁰

Man, the sinner, shares his humanity with Adam; the "new" man likewise shares in the life of Christ. It is man as a human being who is the object of that redemption which not only frees man from the consequences of sin but saves and equips him for life through Jesus Christ. For Grundtvig no Christian enlightenment of men is possible apart from the word, which alone casts light upon the grace of God. The word is the vehicle for that which is spiritual in both man and God. However, the word in a broader sense is the excitingly creative vehicle for all human thought and for ideas which await their implementation in the secular sphere of man's existence. Here lies the key

to an appreciation of Grundtvig's grasp of the "sacred secular" which is so relevant for our day. He rejects the view of the pietists that the human or temporal life must be renounced. I deliberately use the phrase "sacred secular" to emphasize that while Grundtvig turns his back upon an exclusively "other-worldly" view of Christianity and thus contributes to the growing realization that the Christian life must take our human existence seriously, he is not a secularist. He asserts that in the order of creation the human life is part of a divine design. There is a sacredness about human life which gives significance to our temporal or secular existence. The goal is not to stop at this point, but to acknowledge the necessity for the new man in Christ—the Christian. If we rob Grundtvig's own language and thought about man of their Christian content and implication—as many have done—we are not following the same road as he. The recognition and the development of the rights and potentials of the life of man, individual and collective, ultimately determines the character of the kind of Christian society that is unfolding before us. It is important for man and society that the Christian order, which we envision, should concern itself about man in his totality.

Grundtvig's thinking revolved constantly around the significance of life in the light of creation. It was for life's sake that it mattered greatly to Grundtvig whether man was saved or lost. His own struggles with the reality and power of sin had convinced him that man alone is utterly incapable of effecting any radical change in himself. The Christian renewal of man is inseparable from baptism, and "it emerges by the power of the Holy Spirit out of the original human life."⁴¹

It is the power of human speech and the ability to respond to both the word of man and the word of God which makes the word the perfect vehicle for revelation. The word is both creative and enlightening. The enlightening aspect of the word is seen in man's ability to employ language in a multitude of ways. Man can speak, write, and debate. Man may not only employ human words to express the invisible, the spiritual, and the eternal, but he is also able

to delineate both the intricacy and the evolving of human life; he can accurately trace both the fall of man, with all of its tragic and corrupting effects, and the restoration, with all of its blessed and wonderful fruits. Thus it is equally impossible for us to be tempted either to think nothing of the depravation of human life and the loss of the soul because of sin and death, or to misjudge the unique nature of the word through which the continuum of life is seen. It is in this connection that light is shed upon the relation between all peoples

and languages and the new Christian life and the new tongues, resembling fire, which settle on each of them to speak, as the Spirit directs, about God's mighty work of grace in the mother tongue of every people.⁴²

Grundtvig's emphasis upon God's mighty work of grace stems from his great indebtedness to Martin Luther. But the nineteenth-century problem is not the same as that which faced Luther and his early followers. There is a double rather than a single front. It is not only a question of official Christianity, but a question of man as an individual and as a member of his people—*folket*. In his concern for a better Christian understanding of man, Grundtvig dissociated himself from orthodox theologians in the Danish Lutheran Church of his day. There is a line of continuity between Adam and Christ. What God does for the salvation of man through Jesus Christ concerns men of flesh and blood. There is a point of contact! For Grundtvig the Christian message is comprehensible to the common man, who perceives in the uniqueness of the human word the ability to communicate in meaningful language the human, the spiritual, the temporal, and the eternal verities.

Grundtvig was really a Christian apologist, whose defense of the faith actually inaugurated a new chapter in our understanding of the human and the Christian and their interrelationship. The freedom which he championed for man was rooted in his firm belief in the reality of spirit. If anyone were to ask him what mattered most, he would answer: life! Thus the phrase, "for life's sake," aptly expresses Grundtvig's commitment to the total renewal of his people on many fronts.

S I G N S O F L I F E

There is a contemporaneity about Grundtvig which can be misleading. Grundtvig was not primarily concerned about a new set of activities. Nowhere in his voluminous writings, most certainly not in his hymns, did he suggest that the way to renewal of the Christian life lies outside the congregation. Yet the church has something to say that is quite independent both of the professional theologian and of the ecclesiastical establishment's hierarchy. There are concomitants of spiritual renewal, but these are not limited to the field of religion. They extend also into the secular areas of life. In other words, the Christian faith is for Grundtvig a factor in the total environment of a people. Of course, there are *other* factors besides religion at work in the contemporary setting of the church or congrega-

tion. In the secular world the church or congregation may well join hands with others on a common front, but all such efforts must be seen for what they are: *et folkeligt arbejde*, a people's national task. The church's potential contribution to the common good of society demands its participation if Christianity is to be a leaven.

Unfortunately, Grundtvig's view on the human and the Christian has not received sufficient attention by American Lutheran theologians. For Grundtvig, Christianity presupposed the human. The hoped-for goal of the gospel is meaningful only in terms of man. It is man who needs reconciliation. Christianity, according to Grundtvig's position, takes the human condition seriously. The Christian can share in the joys of every sign which points to the renewal of life among the people to which he belongs. A living people may by the grace of God become an awakened people. Without creating a dichotomy between the human and the Christian, Grundtvig does speak about the Christian signs of life. The Christian may, of course, point to his own personal involvement at many points outside the congregation as evidence of his commitment, but Grundtvig saw more clearly than most that for the evidence of what distinctly characterizes the Christian life we must turn to the church or congregation whence stems the motivation, inspiration, and calling to make Christianity a factor in the improvement of man's human and societal condition. Therefore, the signs of a living church or congregation were important for Grundtvig. He began his discussion about signs or evidence of Christian life by saying:

It is characteristic of Christianity that from its inception it has caused every thoughtful individual who has been impressed by its divine truth to recognize that the question of salvation cannot possibly be construed as a matter of significance for the eternal life, unless man's salvation has an observable effect upon his temporal, human existence. Consequently, whoever actually denies this and merely expects from Christianity a so-called "blessed death" not only reveals his own lifeless spirituality but exposes Christianity to the bitter, seemingly well-deserved ridicule of the unbelieving world. If the gospel of Christ were only a so-called "word of eternal life" that made the temporal human life even more lifeless than it was before, then no truth-loving person could or ought to believe such a gospel. Surely, whatever proves to be spiritless, lifeless, and powerless in time cannot possibly assume the dimensions of spirit and power in eternity. Furthermore, our Lord Jesus Christ has witnessed that we must be born anew in the course of time if we are to have part in the eternal life. It is this truth about life on earth that we must first accept before we can believe the truth about eternal life.⁴³

Grundtvig shared completely Luther's position that from the Christian point of view we cannot point to any essential difference between so-called "religious" and "secular" persons. Grundtvig's problem was not Luther, but the Lutheranism of his own day. Luther's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century followers were the object of his severe criticism despite their orthodoxy, because while they rightly stressed faith they definitely gave the impression that it would be wiser to repudiate life and to think only about a "blessed death" than to deal with man's temporal existence which, in their opinion, was wicked and unimprovable. Even Søren Kierkegaard does not throw sufficient light on the relationship between faith and life. In Grundtvig's thought, Kierkegaard attempts to turn men away from a genuine human life by his suggestion that the mendicant friar "is the only true disciple of Christ who has literally taken His cross upon himself and followed Him."⁴⁴ For Grundtvig the concept of a Christian people, so dominant a factor in Luther's theology, was a living reality, which explains his fundamental opposition to Kierkegaard's point of view. Referring to Kierkegaard, Grundtvig says that

precisely this occasion made it indisputably clear that all discussion about the Christian life is of no avail unless we presuppose and maintain that the Christian church or congregation, which is created through baptism according to the Lord's own institution, has in—and only in—this baptism its unique source of life. Consequently, the congregation's confession of faith at baptism is the only Christian confession. As the living testimony of the Christian faith it becomes the Alpha and Omega of the Christian marks of life."⁴⁵

Despite all arguments to the contrary, Grundtvig took the intransigent position that the church is not without evidences of life. He was as disillusioned with the ecclesiastical establishment of his day as any mid-nineteenth century critic of the Danish State Church. Grundtvig was too steeped in early church history to look for the renewal of Christian life outside the church or the congregation. He was no more a separatist than Luther, even though he was tempted more than once to leave the established church. His position was that a living church or congregation can point to unmistakable evidences of its own distinctiveness.

First of all, the congregation possesses something that distinguishes it as a society of believers, namely, the faith. What the church believes is *heard in the word of faith*. Secondly, this distinctiveness is *orally* confessed by the congregation. Thirdly, there is the sign of preaching. In Grundtvig's thought the sermon should call for

a response. Finally, he sees in the singing of hymns the congregation's affirmation of the truth of the gospel which has been expounded through the sermon. These signs must be present "if the Christian life is to succeed and progress as the life which is born of faith."⁴⁶ The church or congregation that falls short in these areas gradually ceases to be a living and witnessing church. Grundtvig never tires of praising the "rebirth of living preaching as it unmistakably occurred through Martin Luther."⁴⁷ It is significant to observe that each of these signs—the word of faith (not a written document), the congregation's oral confession of faith, the sermon or preaching, and hymn-singing—gives the church or congregation a distinctive Christian *voice*. He knows the debt which the Lutheran Church in Denmark owes Luther on this point. Of the great reformer's preaching he says:

Martin Luther, who once preached the ancient "word of faith" with spirit and fervor in his mother tongue . . . gave new impetus to preaching not only among the Anglo-Saxons . . . and the people of the three Scandinavian countries, but also in some degree among the French-speaking peoples, most noticeably in the case of the Calvinists.⁴⁸

For those who are aware that Grundtvig has literally embodied his theology in the great hymns he wrote, it is not surprising to find him praising Luther for the use of the vernacular in the service of the church, especially in preaching and hymn-singing. This aspect of the Reformation is to Grundtvig a "valid testimony to the Christian character of Lutheran preaching."⁴⁹ It becomes nothing less than a sign of life. It provides the inspiration for hymn-writing and hymn-singing which is not at variance with what the church believes and proclaims "because it is in and through the singing of hymns that the congregation responds to the word expressed."⁵⁰

Indeed, this concept needs to be examined for what it may contribute toward modern man's more adequate understanding of why we employ our rich treasury of hymns as divine praises in the worship of the church. Grundtvig's answer is that the congregation which sings is responding *viva voce* to what it has *heard* read and spoken from the chancel and the pulpit.

Grundtvig, who was always reacting, saw shortcomings in Lutheran preaching and hymns in his own country. But he was not a rebel. He was too conscious of his own debt to Luther and the Lutheran Reformation, especially in its formative stage, to sweep aside that which had nourished his own people for three centuries.

He was critical of the established church only because it lacked relevancy.

Grundtvig's complaint is that the worship of the church fails to recognize the significance of tradition for the faith. There is a lack of life in the service of worship. If the Christian message, as communicated through sermons and hymns, is to illumine man's understanding of the source and goal of the Christian life, it must relate the faith to both baptism and the Lord's Supper and point to the constant effect of these sacraments upon the individual and collective life of the believer. Where this is done, whatever faults anyone may otherwise find with the preaching of the gospel are offset, he contends, by a process of correction which he attributes to the work of the Holy Spirit in the congregation. Thanks to Martin Luther, the Reformation has borne fruit wherever it has taken genuine root, but the renewal of the church's life, as amply seen in his own day, is an ongoing task, forever unfinished.

What is pertinent for our day in this connection is to observe Grundtvig's insistence that there must be freedom from external pressure, whether by religious or secular authorities, if the signs of Christian life are not to become less effectual and less conspicuous. It is for this reason that Grundtvig advocated freedom for the clergy and freedom for the congregation. Wherever the civil law requires a religious test in one form or another, the citizen can never be certain of the sincerity and steadfastness of his faith. For Grundtvig, the Holy Spirit moves from freedom to freedom. "The glorious freedom which in every way belongs to the children of God" is the work of the Spirit.⁵¹

FREEDOM FOR THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD

In this section, discussion will be limited to the subject of the Confessional Service in preparation for Holy Communion. Like Martin Luther, Grundtvig could not separate preaching and the administration of the sacraments from the Christian community, i.e., the congregation. Without preaching there is no congregation. Grundtvig fully shared Luther's position that there is a corollary to preaching, namely, the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins. Grundtvig's own life illustrates how insufferable a spiritual burden it is for an ordained pastor to be deprived of administering the very sacraments which presuppose the Christ-faith. Modern Luther scholars rightly point to a strong pastoral concern on the part of Luther. Grundtvig's

concern was just as great but manifested itself in another form. Grundtvig unquestionably agrees with Luther when the latter (in the *Short Form* of 1520) says, "I believe that the forgiveness of sins is to be found in this community and nowhere else." Grundtvig's consistent cry for freedom within the church was related to his deep desire to exercise in all of its fullness the ministry of a redemptive and reconciling faith. Far from isolating the individual, Grundtvig placed him within the congregation, which for Grundtvig was as existentially real as the life of any individual.

In order to fully understand the situation against which Grundtvig was rebelling, it becomes necessary to delineate the changes which were then being introduced in a number of congregations in various parts of Denmark.

According to the prescribed ritual of 1685 and the authorized *Altar Book of 1688*, which had had a direct bearing upon the liturgical life in the Church of Denmark down to the present, the communicant was obligated by law to present himself at the appointed preparatory service, known as *Skriftemaal*, prior to receiving the sacrament. The *Skriftemaal* or Confessional Service reached its culmination when the pastor laid his hand on the head of the communicant and pronounced the unconditional absolution: "I declare unto you the gracious forgiveness of all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."⁵² The instructions to the pastor were very specific. The absolution must be given to each individual communicant.⁵³

Within a century the Confessional Service gradually changed. Instead of each individual's acknowledging his sins, the pastors began to divide the individuals who came to the Confessional Service into groups of not more than eight to ten persons. Normally the *Skriftemaal* was held on Saturday, and it was not uncommon for pastors to devote from two to three hours each Saturday to this pastoral responsibility of their office.

In Grundtvig's time the impetus for change in the Confessional Service had gained momentum. The stress on the examination of conscience had diminished, and pastors were beginning to make a brief address (*Skriftetale*) to those who desired to commune. Even so, the unconditional absolution caused much distress on the part of clergy and laity alike. The obligatory *Skriftemaal* had become a stumbling block to many both within and without the church. Many pastors tampered with the text of the prescribed form for absolution either exercising their own individual judgment or imitating the

practice of others. Some demanded that the Confessional Service be discontinued altogether. Whatever freedom the clergy exercised in their attempt to solve a very vexing problem was in reality a violation of the law, but at a deeper level the variant forms they introduced were a reflection of an inescapable tension within the Danish Folk-Church that was beginning to feel its way in the new order of things.

Grundtvig disagreed with those who advocated the abolition of the *Skriftemaal*, sharing the position of those who aimed at greater freedom within the established church. He held that the Folk Church, by its very origin, cannot be a genuine faith-society.

On the contrary, "it is nothing more than a human and public institution for the education and edification of the people."⁵⁴ This is "the king's and the Danish people's church."⁵⁵ Here Grundtvig, who was a member of the assembly which in 1849 gave Denmark a modern constitution, is pointing to the fact that the Folk Church is the product of the constitution which stipulates that the Folk Church is to be governed by law. Grundtvig carefully avoids confusing the establishment, created by the constitution and ultimately governed by law, with Christ's church. He champions the cause of freedom within the Folk Church in order that it may provide the ecclesiastical framework which will permit the existence and nurture of genuine Christian fellowships centered in the local congregation (*menighed*) and its worship.

Grundtvig was in complete accord with Luther that the *Skriftemaal* and the absolution are not a sacrament. Even so, he was not restricted in his freedom of opinion or thought. Mere citation of words by either Luther or the pope does not suffice. He did not look for a subterfuge from an existent problem by merely quoting statements from the leader of the Reformation. The heart of the problem, as Grundtvig viewed church life in mid-nineteenth century Denmark, was essentially one of faith and belief. The truth of the situation was that

all real members of the church of Christ are ill at ease with the present order of things which, speaking from both a Christian and a human point of view, is nothing other than a dreadful disorder. The only thing which keeps them in the Folk Church is the feeling that, if the Christian pastors are able to endure this situation, they too should be able to remain. Thus, they do place a heavy weight of responsibility upon our hearts. Hence if I, as pastor of Vartov Church, had not been so uniquely fortunate that the freedom, which is indispensable, was granted me as something normal, I should have severed my connection long ago.⁵⁶

Grundtvig's criticism of "official Christianity" was the great incongruity between what it solemnly professed and what it actually practiced.

It is not at all like servants of Christ and his church that they willingly administer baptism and communion to all without distinction, assuring them simultaneously of the forgiveness of sin in the name of Christ and his church, but that they have all kinds of scruples about wasting their own words on the unworthy.⁵⁷

Grundtvig rejected the neat division between the forgiveness of original sin in baptism and the forgiveness offered in the sacrament of penance by the Roman Catholic Church. But he thought that Lutherans, who had rightly rejected this "self-made, unfounded, comfortless dichotomy," failed to see the consequences of this common practice of Lutheran theologians in his century to relate the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin to faith without distinguishing clearly between *the Christian faith, which we confess in baptism, and our faith that Christ dies for our sins.*

For Grundtvig the question was not whether man needs divine forgiveness, but where man in the midst of today's predicament is going to find it.

We must continue to hold the view that the remission of sin is bestowed upon us in baptism and is offered to us in all its plenitude, but not unconditionally. It clearly presupposes faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which we all confess in baptism and thus obtain justification.⁵⁸

Grundtvig did not support the voices clamoring for a discontinuance of the Confessional Service on the grounds that it constituted an admixture of Christian faith, superstition, credulity, and papistry. He simply did not share their point of view. His case for the retention of the *Skriftemaal* is as follows:

I . . . have chosen to retain the *Skriftemaal* on its own merit. I regard it as a human innovation of obscure origin, standing in an ambiguous relation to both baptism and the Lord's Supper. It has become clear to me that I cannot withhold absolution from those to whom I am able in good conscience to administer communion, because I cannot administer Holy Communion without declaring . . . that his blood is poured out for them for the forgiveness of sins. . . . In my communion addresses (*Skriftetaler*) I constantly relate the forgiveness of sin to the Lord and to baptism . . . with the result that I have discovered, that I, without reservation, can pronounce the absolution in the service of preparation for the Lord's Supper to the believer, even as the Lord himself in the communion assures them that he has purchased them with his blood. I have discovered that the danger of taking grace for granted and of going on in sin is neither greater nor

less because of the absolution than it always is wherever the gospel of Christ is faithfully preached as God's power for salvation, which offers the forgiveness of sins by calling not the just but sinners to repentance.⁵⁹

In the course of time it has become my conviction that the Spirit in the church is not inclined to move us to abolish the *Skriftemaal* but to purify it and make it understood. Personally I wish, of course, that the Folk-Church would concede to make the *Skriftemaal* optional, leaving it a matter to be decided between the pastor and his communicants, since neither the secular power nor any other has the least spiritual or Christian right to interfere.⁶⁰

Grundtvig stemmed the dissolution of a time-honored practice within the Danish Church, but little did he realize, I am certain, that the place of the *Skriftemaal* would again be questioned, that the *Skriftetale* would disappear by default, that a general absolution would replace the individual absolution in an increasing number of congregations, and, finally, that many would receive Communion without having taken part in the preparatory service, or *Skriftemaal*. All this has taken place in less than a century, since Grundtvig, in the spirit of Martin Luther, fought a lonely battle for evangelical freedom for that not insignificant minority who could embrace neither Rationalism nor Pietism but sought the renewal of church life through the historic Christian faith.

Grundtvig championed freedom for the sake of man. When he spoke about the need for freedom in the church, he was definitely considering both the clergy and the laity. In fact, he was speaking about the Christian man and his right to exercise certain options as either a pastor or a layman. The Danish Folk Church was a far different establishment than the old State-Church; it was created by the Constitution of Denmark and governed by law. Within this establishment there must develop, according to Grundtvig, a church polity that would make possible the continued existence and nurture of genuine Christian fellowships centered in the congregation and its worship. The Folk Church, in contrast to the free churches, was the one to which the majority of the citizens belonged. Hence, it required a degree of latitude and freedom from coercion without which it could not serve as a folk church at all. There must be freedom within the church for every member, clergy and laity alike. Grundtvig was motivated in the direction of liberty because he was concerned about the exercise of his Christian vocation as an ordained pastor in an ecclesiastical establishment constituted and governed by law, making him and his fellow pastors officeholders.

The older I become, the more clearly I see that my essential Christian mission within my own sphere is to exercise my utmost ability in clarifying for both friends and enemies that: true Christianity, far from being in league with any kind of spiritual slavery or coercion, or any kind of hypocrisy, secrecy, or cant, is not only able to tolerate but demands complete human freedom as well as all human enlightenment, because Christianity can perform its mission in the full measure of its power—and can only be seen in its glory—where its enemies have the same freedom as Christianity to make themselves spiritually felt.⁶¹

Surely there is ever so much more one could say and write on this subject, but for those who do not give priority to the human aspect of life, its free evolution and its progressive enlightenment, no presentation will be satisfactory. On the other hand, the friends of freedom and enlightenment will readily perceive that I have no intention of disturbing any existent magnificence. I do want to see the immense confusion replaced by a new order of things which will simultaneously give due justice both to the Christian and to civic interests and will thereby serve society and the individual equally well. It is only for the common good of freeborn souls that I want the vestiges of the old spiritual servitude swept out.⁶²

Grundtvig could speak in this fashion because he had no doubt about the truth of Christianity. What he really championed was the freedom of the truth to be spoken and heard in and from the pulpit, at the communion table, and at the baptismal font. To some this may seem an oversimplification of the problem to be solved. The historic fact is that the renewal which he helped to bring about had a transforming influence on the whole life of the Danish people.

THE END OF PARTISANSHIP

By 1834 Grundtvig recognized that despite the fundamental difference between himself and the nineteenth-century naturalists, mere partisanship on his own part might not be the answer. He was beginning to see that there are areas of common concern where men of quite different minds may join hands in order to effect freedom for unrestricted action. He made it very clear in his treatise *Den Danske Statskirke* that his trips to England had opened his eyes to a *different* world.⁶³

Grundtvig says that he "learned to take due cognizance of the undeniable advantage of seeing both things and persons as they really are."⁶⁴ He was always reacting and casting what he encountered into a new mold, distinctly his own. He apparently wanted to apply what he had seen or been told about church life in England to

the situation in his own country. At any rate, Grundtvig was taking a new look at the state church.

The state church is not a church-state but simply an agency or establishment of the state which the government has the right to change, according to its own decision, without sulkiness on the part of any bishop, pastor, or professor as long as there is no infringement of the freedom of conscience, which is essential to all religion and is the inalienable right of every citizen who has not been legally deprived of his civil rights.⁶⁵

Instead of engaging in a discussion about church and state, which centers around ambiguous words, Grundtvig wanted to take a real look at the establishment to determine what *it* really *is*. What is the state church? Is it the theological faculty or is it the clergy? Are we not still entertaining views, despite the Reformation, which somehow perpetuate this confusion of things? In other words, as long as we fail to understand that freedom, even the freedom of religion, rests upon civil legislation, it is practically impossible for the clergy of the established church to avoid being partisan. He reflected upon his own earlier position, in which he had taken the stand that opponents of Lutheran orthodoxy ought to be excluded from the confessional, established church. Now, in 1834, he could reminisce about his own position of ten years earlier:

I never quite clarified for myself the question of the religious freedom in our country for the "opponents," until I took decisive action and resigned my pastorate. Only then did I become non-partisan.⁶⁶

It is tremendously important to grasp that it was really civil liberty which for Grundtvig guaranteed the extent of religious liberty, and not vice versa. The question was not whether any pastor in the established church should be free to speak according to his convictions, but to what extent, if any, he might interfere, in the name of religion, with "a single iota of any person's civil rights simply because he calls another religion true and that of the official clergy false."⁶⁷

He was persuaded that no legislator in nineteenth-century Denmark would ever view the sects as a threat to the country simply because they, on a small scale, demanded the same freedom of conscience as the followers of the Reformation had not only demanded but defended most vigorously in the Augsburg Confession.⁶⁸ Grundtvig made another point that I feel is uniquely his own, namely, that any attempt to prevent the voices of either dissent or protest to be heard is really equivalent to limiting the expansion of our religious

knowledge. It is part of the burden—literally the cross—which an honorable pastor will not hesitate to bear. The events of his own day show that it is for the good of the whole nation when the threat of ecclesiastical monopoly disappears. A ruling church exercising tyranny over the minds of men is totally incompatible not only with the spirit of Christianity and the Reformation but with the spirit of the times.

Grundtvig's extensive knowledge of the history and culture of his country made him very conscious of the cultural aspect of Christianity. For him the Reformation opened the gates to knowledge and the idea of a truly learned ministry. In this connection I am not concerned about his just criticism of the period of Danish Lutheran orthodoxy which spoke of Luther as though he were a pontiff. I am certain that he correctly reflected the Danish clergy's regard for Luther during this period.

For Grundtvig there was a connection between religion and culture. An historically minded people cannot ignore the development of religion prior to the time of its Christianization. The nineteenth century is not the time for opposition to the spread of general education. Anti-intellectualism is not the cure for arrogance or self-will on the part of those who accord reason the highest place. There is a better solution. The modern state ought to combat the undesirable consequences of false views by contributing to the advancement of education. It is the obligation of the state to give equal protection to all who teach in order to promote general as well as higher education. The clergy has a distinct role in this field. The schools must not be deprived of the contribution which religion has to make to education, including knowledge of one's ancestral pagan religion. Grundtvig viewed the participation of pastors in the work of the schools, elementary and secondary, as one way in which to bring students into personal contact with men of some academic competence. He was enamored, quite understandably, of the cultural influence which had emanated from many parsonages.

Grundtvig's expanding view of the real world, in which issues are live and debatable by men of different schools of thought, stood in sharp contrast to that of the young Grundtvig. He now saw things in a perspective that made room for partnership with those sharing the common hope for a future when conditions would be the best possible for the realization of good government, civil unity among the people, spiritual freedom, and a new, forward-looking, genuinely humane education. He was persuaded that this could be attained and

pointed out that the time was ripe for implementing the idea of freedom by saying that "the Danish government has realized for a long time that universal freedom of conscience must be brought about in one way or another in this generation."⁶⁹

In this discussion of Grundtvig's encounter with the secular world I have purposely refrained from dealing exclusively with the question of the church. It is too easy to give an almost universal dimension to Grundtvig's struggle with the Danish state church. Indeed, there are very important lessons to be learned, but I think that one might well bear in mind what Grundtvig said about his own relation to Luther and the Reformation. He wanted to perform his work in the spirit of Martin Luther, but neither the situation nor the problems of his day were the same as those of the sixteenth century. What he accomplished was epoch-making in nineteenth-century Danish church history.⁷⁰

The growing consciousness of Grundtvig's uniquely Christian contribution to the renewal of the life of the church is seen in the memorial tablet on the right wall of the entrance to Kristianskirken, placed there in memory and appreciation of Grundtvig's service in that church. I copied the inscription on June 24, 1957, which in translation reads:

This stone tablet is placed here to speak to coming generations about N. F. S. Grundtvig, who, while he was not allowed to administer the Lord's sacraments of baptism and communion, nevertheless served as a free preacher of the living word of God. Here, under great hardships, he prepared for the awakening of Danish congregational life and hymn-singing, which, through him, were to emanate from the church of Vartov.

GLORY BE TO GOD

Wherever the name and word of Jesus Christ are confessed and preached, the kingdom of God is verily present, however infant the beginning.

N O T E S

¹ Grundtvig's dates were 1783-1872. The most recent developments in Grundtvig studies are reflected in the 1964 conference in Denmark where a group of German and Danish theologians met for the purpose of initiating a new series of studies relating to Kierkegaard and Grundtvig. Dr. Paul C. Nyholm lists Professors N. Søe, K. E. Løgstrup, and Gotz Harbsmeier as the leaders in this project. Cf. *Kirke og Folk* (February 10, 1967) p. 11.

² Cf. Kaj Thaning, *Menneske Først* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1963), ch. 5.

³ N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Skal den lutherske Reformation virkelig fortsættes*, 1830 (Begtrup edition) V, 279.

⁴ Thaning, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁵ 1834.

⁶ Thaning, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁷ P. G. Lindhardt points out that the movement was too dependent upon the pietistic pastors to be a genuine awakening or revival of the people. Cf. *Vaekkelser og Kirkelige Retninger i Danmark* (Copenhagen, 1951), p. 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31ff.

⁹ Cf. *Service Book and Hymnal*, No. 151. See also No. 257, "God's Word is our great heritage."

¹⁰ N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Den Christne Kirke og Den Tydske Theologi*, 1837 (Holger Begtrup's edition), VIII, 166.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

¹² N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Bibelske Praedikener* [Biblical Sermons] (2d ed.; Copenhagen: Karl Schønbergs Forlag, 1883), pp. 492 f.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 492.

¹⁵ Jeremiah 22:29.

¹⁶ Grundtvig, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

²¹ George Christensen and Stener Grundtvig, eds., *Breve fra og til N. F. S. Grundtvig* (Copenhagen, 1924), pp. 298, 333.

²² Grundtvig, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁹ N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Den kristelige Børnelærdom* (3rd ed.; Copenhagen, 1883).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁵² N. A. Larsen, *Folkekirkens Gudstjeneste* (Copenhagen, 1936), p. 70.

⁵³ Andreas Krogh, ed., *Danmark og Norges Kirkritual* (new ed.; Copenhagen, 1855), ch. IV, art. 1, p. 76.

⁵⁴ Grundtvig, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁶³ Grundtvig visited England three times between 1829 and 1831, and made a fourth and last visit in 1843.

⁶⁴ *Den Danske Statskirke* (Begtrup's edition), VIII, 55.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁷⁰ For those readers who are not conversant with Grundtvig's thought, an additional note may be in order. Luther is greatly admired by Grundtvig, but theological stagnation is not in the spirit of Luther. Grundtvig pleads for honesty on the part of those professors and theologians who only pay lip service to the teachings of the Lutheran Church. He is ready to admit that he finds fault with Luther's teachings at four points because Luther (1) rejected the oral tradition about the faith without distinguishing clearly between *it* and other traditions, (2) asserted that everything which requires acceptance on the part of all must have scriptural support, (3) overlooked the testimony of history in regard to the pristine church on grounds that it lacked biblical verification, and (4) asserted that the articles of the Augsburg Confession are articles of *faith* which all true Christians must accept. Cf. *Skal den lutherske Reformation virkelig fortsættes*, p. 236. In my book, *N. F. S. Grundtvig: An American Study* (Rock Island: Augustana, 1956), I have discussed critically Grundtvig's theology and its development into a movement.

WALTHER, SCHAFF, AND KRAUTH ON LUTHER

E. THEODORE BACHMANN

FOR THE three men in this triptych, the year 1883—the quadricentennial of Luther's birth—had been awaited with uncommon anticipation. One had his heart set on finishing an eagerly sought biography of the Reformer; the second on guiding to completion a monumental seminary building; and the third on pushing forward several projects, each of which in its own right would have sufficed as the lifework of a gifted scholar. For the third man, the year 1883 turned out almost as anticipated. For the second, it marked the high point of a career. For the first, the year brought death on its second day and some months later ensconced an able young successor—in whose synoptic vision the three men belong together.¹

Charles Porterfield Krauth, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, and Philip Schaff were, as their names might suggest, leading exponents of interest in German theology. Confined to no single denomination or confession, this interest emerged on the American scene in the 1840's. By 1883 it had won a place for itself in a free society and in a religious context that Dietrich Bonhoeffer would fifty years later describe as "Protestantism without Reformation."² To group Krauth, Walther, and Schaff in triptych form is to see them together and separately at the same time. This is how it was in their life. They had more in common than divided them. Even Schaff, born Swiss Reformed, had been confirmed a Lutheran³ and committed to Pietism before studying theology in Tübingen, experiences that left an imprint on his long career as an ordained Reformed, then Presbyterian, scholar and churchman. Walther, the gifted leader of the "Missouri" Lutherans, was a Leipzig University man, and came with the Saxon emigration in 1839—preceding Schaff's arrival in America by five years. Krauth, a third-generation American and native of Virginia, was the youngest of the three men. A graduate of the college and seminary in Gettysburg, where he was influenced less by Samuel Schmucker and more by his professor-father at the same seminary,

young Krauth became a leader in the East of a church-conscious confessional Lutheran movement.

To group these men together is nothing forced, even though they themselves—had it happened to them in real life—might have registered some form of initial surprise. By juxtaposing them we can take a fresh look at a period whose often clashing differences as well as solid achievements are part of the preparation for a confessional participation in the ecumenism of the twentieth century. This historiographical exercise, moreover, is not unrelated to the recovery of American religious history, of which Henry F. May and others speak,⁴ or to the preparation of teaching tools in a field where, as James H. Nichols reminds us, a far-visioned type of scholarly enterprise has been urgently needed.⁵

To focus attention on a single year, 1883, makes sense.⁶ I do not propose to overplay the wave of celebrations in Europe and America in honor of the best-known Protestant Reformer. But I shall attempt to discern ways in which a Krauth, a Walther, and a Schaff figured prominently in engraving a fuller awareness of the Reformation into American life.⁷ As such, this study may be read against the wider background as depicted, on the one hand, by Wilhelm Pauck's collected essays on *The Heritage of the Reformation*⁸ and, on the other, by Donald H. Yoder's account of Christian unity in 19th-century America.⁹ The inner circuitry of this presentation will become readily evident as it deals first with the Jubilee of 1883 and then with the interacting careers of the three men.

The more one recovers the temper of the times, the less surprising it appears that the Luther jubilee of 1883 received as wide recognition in America as it did. To a Krauth, a Walther, or a Schaff, as we shall see, the prospect of this jubilee was a spur to action. Such action, however expressed, was part of the mystique of a Protestant quasi-establishment. Whether this establishment understood him or not, it could use a hero. Luther was the man. Who better than he could be celebrated as the fearless retort to the abiding threat of Roman Catholicism, recharged as it had recently been at the Vatican Council with the confidence of papal infallibility and the continuing spirit of ultramontanism?¹⁰ Nor was American Protestantism altogether unaware of the *Kulturkampf* of the 1870's which had brought Bismarck's newly achieved Reich into collision with Rome. Besides, the Civil War experience had by no means fully expelled the fears

that had given rise to the nativist "Protestant crusade" and that were now being nourished by new and even more massive urban concentrations of Roman Catholic immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe.¹¹ The jubilee, in other words, was timely. It was many things to many people: political, popular, confessional, even scholarly. It will be of interest to ponder these four aspects briefly before turning to our three men in the triptych.

From the *political* angle the Luther jubilee was abstract and romantic. Luther was lauded as the champion of those liberties which made the free society possible and the individual a responsible citizen. While Calvin and Puritanism were recognized as the direct ancestry of the American Protestant ethic, what could be more convenient than to appropriate Luther as a heroic forerunner.¹² As if to sum up these sentiments, the Martin Luther Society, formed by enterprising laymen in New York City in 1883, not only aimed to foster closer association among Lutherans but also succeeded in placing a Luther statue in the nation's capital.¹³ The political effect of the Reformation in Europe was a matter of record, but its outcome—seen as the full separation of church and state and as the enjoyment of unprecedented individual freedom—was idealized and attributed in part to Luther.¹⁴ Such, at least, was an outlook common to much of Protestant America in those days.

In contrast, those were also days when *The Catholic World*, edited (1865-88) by Isaac Thomas Hecker, was popularizing an opposite line. A native New Yorker and a Methodist in his youth, Hecker was of German Lutheran descent. His eventual conversion to Roman Catholicism and his rejection of his parental German and Lutheran origin¹⁵ make him a "second generation" American type. But his espousal of the unpopular Roman Catholic cause, as well as his organizing of the Paulist Fathers, gave a special twist to this second-generationism as he relentlessly sought to save American democracy by converting Americans to Roman Catholicism. With more realism than most Protestants cared to admit, and with a flair for the prophetic, Hecker insisted that democracy does not spring from Protestantism. He insisted that democracy is a "denial of the fundamental tenets of Luther and of Calvin." Besides, he charged that "democracy, tied to Protestantism, is bound to a dying system."¹⁶ In saying this, he was in company with Emerson and Thoreau who, likewise, had tried to rid democracy of "the incubus of Protestantism."¹⁷

From the political side, therefore, the Luther jubilee was sailing in troubled waters and indulging in more poetry than truth.

From the *popular* angle, Protestant America had never experienced an honoring of the Reformation like the Luther jubilee. Few were still alive who could tell about the festivities of the Reformation's tercentenary in 1817.¹⁸ That was the so-called "era of good feeling," denominational as well as politically. Two decades later an irenic Lutheran like Samuel Simon Schmucker, president of Gettysburg Seminary, still breathed its spirit in his *Fraternal Appeal*¹⁹ to unity among the several Protestant denominations. Although the Plan of Union between Congregationalists and Presbyterians fell apart, and the slavery issue divided Baptists, Methodists, and others, as late as 1855 Philip Schaff could tell his friends in Germany that America was "destined to be the Phenix-grave . . . of all European churches and sects, of Protestantism and Romanism."²⁰

With the ending of the Civil War, the 350th anniversary of the Reformation (1867) received comparatively little attention in the new "gilded age." The country was expanding, the native population growing, the tide of immigration again rising, and the denominations proliferating in the pluralism vouchsafed by a free society. The year 1867, however, saw the formation in New York of the "Evangelical Alliance for the United States," a branch of the international body created in London in 1846. In 1873 the American branch was host to the sixth general conference of the international Evangelical Alliance. Some participants boasted that this meeting "beats the Ecumenical Council at Rome!"²¹ Its 516 delegates included 75 from Britain, 12 from Germany, 6 from Switzerland, 4 from India, plus a handful from a half-dozen other countries. Most of those from overseas had been personally secured by one of the Alliance's two corresponding secretaries, Philip Schaff. One of the speakers on Christian union, S. S. Schmucker, died shortly before this gathering.²² He had been close to the Alliance from its initial meeting in London and had been the protagonist of an "American Lutheranism" sympathetic to its aims. His death came after most Lutheran bodies in America had taken a more confessional turn.

It was Schaff who spearheaded the move to make the 1883 meeting of the Alliance's American branch an observance of the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth. This was in the context of celebrations, as he put it, "throughout Protestant Christendom." The Alliance issued invitations to the Protestant churches in the United States to cele-

brate Luther's birthday by sermons on the Reformation. The sermons and addresses in the church periodicals of the autumn of 1883 are but a few of the many which set forth Luther's "merits as a man and a German, as a husband and father, as a preacher, catechist, and hymnist, as a Bible translator and expositor, as a reformer and founder of a church [sic], as a champion of the sacred rights of conscience, an originator of a mighty movement of religious and civil liberty which spread over Europe and across the Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific."²³

The story of Luther's life was repeated in learned and popular biographies in a variety of tongues; it was enacted on the stage in the principal cities of Germany and elsewhere. Not only Lutherans, but Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Unitarians all united in paying tribute to the Reformer. "The Academy of Music in New York," adds Schaff, "could not hold the thousands who crowded the building to attend the Luther-celebration arranged by the Evangelical Alliance in behalf of the leading Protestant denominations of America."²⁴ That occasion included addresses by the Episcopal layman John Jay and by leading preachers of the member denominations: Phillips Brooks (Episcopal), William M. Taylor (Congregational), Bishop Simpson (Methodist), G. Frederick Krotel (Lutheran), and Howard Crosby (Presbyterian). The New York Oratorio Society provided the music.²⁵

In our own day, following the Second Vatican Council and amid the cordiality of ecumenical exchange between America's Roman Catholics and Protestants, the comment of Father Hecker on the celebrations of 1883 is still provocative. The "Yankee Paul," (so they dubbed the founder of the Paulists) charged that

there is scarcely any one doctrine held as of Christian faith by the father of the Reformation that his offspring have not repudiated, or are not prepared to repudiate on the first convenient occasion. They treat Luther's doctrines with the same courtesy with which he treated the doctrines of the Catholic Church. The more active intellect of Protestants everywhere today questions not so much this or that doctrine of Christianity as the why they are Christians at all! They are for the most part convinced that Protestant principles furnish no solid reasons why they are still Christians.

Hecker goes on to claim that the alternative open to intelligent Protestants is this: either enter the fold of the Catholic Church to remain Christians or become agnostics. "The foundations designed by Dr. Martin Luther," he observes,

after three long centuries of experience, have crumbled away entirely, notwithstanding there are Christians, apparently intelligent, who celebrate with unusual *éclat* the fourth centennial birthday of the pseudo-Reformer! This is noteworthy, a very noteworthy, a most noteworthy fact, worthy to be recorded for the memory of future generations.²⁶

From the popular side these festivities could indeed appear vulnerable. But Roman Catholics were not the only ones to pick out flaws in this festive fabric.

From the *confessional* angle the jubilee was a Lutheran folk festival "plus." It had all the features of the popular celebrations encouraged by the Evangelical Alliance and a good deal more besides. From innumerable local events to the festivals in Philadelphia's Academy of Music or in New York's Steinway Hall or in St. Louis's Mercantile Hall, America's spiritual heirs of the Reformer ran the gamut from sentimental "schmaltz" to professional distinction.²⁷ Flooding into the confessional subculture were such items as heroic mementos, eulogistic biographies, catechetical keepsakes, didactic engravings, even (as advertised) "cheap pictures of Luther." These, and more to boot, comprised a kind of evangelical indulgence traffic for the year of jubilee. Especially for those who had experienced the wrench of emigration from the Old Country this trade in confessional "kitch" had a way of assuaging perhaps some of the suppressed nostalgia. If, as Carl Ferdinand Walther warned, all this was simply as ephemeral as fireworks, it also gave notice of something more substantial.

While Protestants in general, like those in the Alliance, extolled Luther in such terms as the pioneer of modern civil and religious liberty, the champion of the open Bible, the restorer of the priesthood of all believers, the advocate of the right of private judgment and of whatever else contributed to America's democratic society, the self-consciously confessional Lutherans tended to exercise their freedom by jubilating alone. To later generations, as to many contemporaries, this seemed incomprehensible, this aloofness from a common doxology. But American Lutherans in the early 1880's (as we shall see later) were in an identity crisis. This had many aspects, not least of which was the virtually chronic crisis created by the transition from a diversity of mother tongues to the English language. Each new tide of immigration tended to regroup constituencies of the faithful as it added to their numbers. In their professed certainty, and often their practical uncertainty as to the limits of allowable fellowship even among Lutherans, one solace lay—paradoxically—in good works.

Take, for example, the opportunity for a bricks-and-mortar witness through the erection of new facilities for the education of confessionally sound pastors. As in a one-act play, this particular act had three scenes: Philadelphia, Rock Island, St. Louis.

For the Philadelphia Seminary, 1883 brought the resolve to relocate the school from its outgrown inner-city quarters to some more commodious place. The death of Dr. Krauth had left the Seminary with an embarrassment of riches: a select library of 14,000 volumes. Founded in 1864 to expedite the education of a confessionally conversant ministry in both English and German, the Philadelphia Seminary was actually a daughter institution to Schmucker's Gettysburg Seminary. Unlike earlier offshoots, such as the Southern or the Ohio seminaries, Philadelphia was a product of the duress of historical as well as contemporary forces. Originally a reply to whatever remained of Schmucker's "American Lutheranism" on the battle-scarred campus, the Philadelphia institution was to cultivate the virtues of confessional conservation as embodied in the largely Krauth-inspired Lutheran General Council (1867). A perusal of the Council's paper, *The Lutheran*,²⁸ provides a play-by-play account of the ways in which the search for a site was being pursued. For sheer wittiness the observations of certain alumni as to how not to raise funds are disarming. It was a jubilee year. Something must be done. Money must be raised. The rank and file were being solicited. But the wealthy had been overlooked. In fact, a site had not yet been secured. All giving was to be done in fullest anticipation that everything would turn out well, even if done backwards.²⁹

The second scene, Rock Island, Illinois. In the spring of 1883 the Augustana Synod had approved plans for a new building on the campus of Augustana College and Seminary. Olof Olsson, enterprising young president of the combined institution, was authorized to raise the funds for the building of what later generations hailed as "Old Main." Olsson was no ordinary fund-raiser. His fellow Swedes called him the "Beggar Boy." His mendicancy was done with the drama of an impresario. During the summer and early autumn of 1883 students helped the volunteer workmen erect a temporary wooden structure of donated lumber. "Jubilee Hall," as it was called, covered a natural amphitheatre on a campus hillside. Built at a cost of \$1,800, this strictly functional assembly hall had a seating capacity of nearly 3,000. For two days, November 7 and 8, it became the resounding center of a memorable Swedish Lutheran folk festival. People came from afar. Women were lodged locally in private

homes. Men slept on the floor of Jubilee Hall on mattresses of coffee bags stuffed with straw. Ample meals cost fifteen cents. During the day, lectures and sermons made this gathering a Lutheran camp meeting with overtones of a chautauqua or a lyceum. Olsson's *Luther-Kalender* provided the rationale, asking, "Have we cut off our connection with both secular and church history by leaving the land of our fathers, so beautiful and so rich in historic memories? If we saw off that branch of the church on which we are sitting, we will fall, it is hard to say how far."³⁰ Like Luther, Olsson put his love for music to work for the gospel. Gathering a chorus and soloists for the occasion, and aided by accomplished musicians—he himself was a skilled pianist and organist—Olsson turned the two evenings into a festival of music. Jubilee Hall was packed for the renditions of Handel's *Messiah* and Wennerberg's *Psalms of David*. The concerts launched the Augustana Oratorio Society, nearly paid for the cost of Jubilee Hall, and set the stage for a popular devotion to Christian concert music that fostered a new feeling of spiritual kinship. It was another five years, however, before "Old Main"—officially Memorial Hall—was completed.³¹ Meanwhile the question of location had brought a note of uneasiness to the seminary in Rock Island. As early as 1869, at a meeting of the Lutheran General Council, Charles Porterfield Krauth had introduced a resolution calling for the creation, preferably in Chicago, of "a Theological Seminary, where the future ministry of the English, German and Scandinavian churches may be educated together, in the unity of a common faith . . ."³²

The third scene, St. Louis. In contrast to Philadelphia and Rock Island, the Luther jubilee of the "Missourians" was celebrated a couple of months early, with the dedication of the new Concordia Seminary. It was monumental, the largest Lutheran edifice for theological education in North America. The two days of festivity, September 9 and 10, were attended by an estimated 15,000 persons. There had been talk of relocating Concordia Seminary in Chicago, where it might become the basis of an inclusive theological school serving the several synods of the recently formed (1872) Synodical Conference.³³ But such regional loyalties as stood in the way were compounded by the rise in the late 1870's of a bitter dispute among conference members over the doctrine of predestination. Commemorating the Book of Concord in its name, yet reflecting anything but accord in intersynodical relations, the massive new building stood as a testimony of devotion to doctrinal purity as understood in St. Louis. The old building of 1850, as well as some recent additions,

gave way to a high-ceilinged three-story "gothic" structure of red brick, white-stone trim, pointed slate roof, and lofty bell tower. Its 225 x 95-foot floor plan provided for a total of 63 rooms for various uses. Students were lodged four to a room. With classrooms, library, assembly hall; dining, laundry, and recreational facilities; central heating, and an apartment residence for the president, the new Concordia was fully self-contained.

"This house," declared Dr. Walther to the crowd on dedication day, Sunday, September 9, "is . . . to serve heavenly purposes. Its tower is a reminder of the dedication of the entire house to God. The tower bell tolls hourly its *sursum corda*, saying, Lift up your hearts, this is a house of holy study, a house of prayer, a house of God!" Enraptured, Walther continued, "In this house, next to Jesus Christ, our only Master, and next to the holy apostles and prophets, no other man shall be the chief teacher than Dr. Martin Luther. He is the one whom God raised up and approved as Reformer of the Church . . ."³⁴ Like the Seer of Patmos, Walther saw an "angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim" (Rev. 14:6), and equated this with the popular German motto: "Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr' vergehet nun und nimmermehr."³⁵ Other addresses, in Latin and English as well as the prevailing German, elaborated the same general theme of gratitude and divinely entrusted purpose. The illumination of the new building on the first evening was climaxed by a fireworks display. As singing had fostered audience participation at all sessions, so the finale of the entire occasion came on the evening of the second day, with a performance in Mercantile Hall of Josef Haydn's *Te Deum*.³⁶

Prior to the celebration the much-traveled Philip Schaff had shown up in St. Louis, paying a visit to Dr. Walther and the faculty at Concordia, "the fountainhead of Old Lutheranism in the West." As Dr. Samuel J. Nicolls of St. Louis, who accompanied Schaff, reported, "The conversation was carried on entirely in German, as but one of the professors was able to speak English."³⁷ Schaff, now a Presbyterian, was kindly disposed toward Lutherans but critical of Lutheranism.³⁸ He himself favored the Evangelical Synod, headquartered also in St. Louis, and, as an offshoot of the Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union, an arch-rival of the Missouri Lutherans. Nevertheless, he appeared to be "much interested in the government of the institution, in the rigorous German discipline. . . . He admired the zeal of these Old Lutherans, who had . . . out of their poverty built such a noble institution. Late in

the evening, when they had taken leave of Walther and his colleagues, Schaff commented to his companion in a joyous mood that this visit—charged with much theological discussion—“was one of the pleasantest days in his life.”³⁹

In a practical way, the dedication of the seminary was shared with the congregations of the Synod. They were all urged to honor Luther’s birthday jubilee on November 10th with a special offering.⁴⁰ The \$140,000 cost of the new Concordia was a good deal more than anticipated. Meanwhile, during the process of construction the enrollment had fallen off somewhat, and for some years remained around 100, while the number attending the “practical” seminary of the Missouri Synod in Springfield, Illinois, nearly tripled (to 176) in the years 1881-87.⁴¹

In retrospect, the extent to which the Luther jubilee prodded his spiritual heirs to extol the role of theological education—in Philadelphia, in Rock Island, in St. Louis, and elsewhere—fell short of what at least the more reflective among them recognized as the major *desideratum*,⁴² that is, the creation of a Lutheran university as the proper context for a theological education that would concern itself both with the word of God and with the life of men. This was a portion of the European legacy which, to be sure, the vast majority believed expendable. Yet there were others for whom this remained a frustrating challenge; their use of the name had been in anticipation of actually achieving a Lutheran university. Nor is it strange that in this jubilee year, for other reasons, thoughts were crystalizing in the mind of the young Roman Catholic Bishop of Peoria, John Lancaster Spalding, thoughts that led in 1884 to his powerful plea for an American Catholic university. “So long,” he warned, “as we look rather to the multiplying of schools and seminaries than to the creation of a real university, our progress will be slow and uncertain, because a university is the great ordinary means to the best cultivation of mind.”⁴³

As the jubilee had its political and popular as well as confessional aspects, so also it evoked a *scholarly* side. Among American Lutherans this could hardly be claimed as a strong side, for with other Americans they shared the prevailing anti-intellectualism. Ironically, the legacy of the Lutheran Reformation—if judged only in terms of its confessional writings—had been formulated in terms that were intellectually demanding, yet this legacy had been entrusted to a basically anti-intellectual constituency. This is not to say that America’s

Lutherans had no scholarly minds among them, for they did. But these were relatively few in number, limited by a lack of resources, and subordinated to the practical concerns of extending the church. The year 1883 disclosed some of the problems involved, particularly with respect to the transmission of Lutheran scholarship into an English-speaking society. These problems appear in at least three places: notably the Lutheran Confessions in English, an authoritative life of Luther, and a critical edition of Luther's works.

In his second volume of *The Book of Concord*, complete with historical introduction, notes, and collateral documents, Henry Eyster Jacobs in 1883 brought to completion the first scholarly edition in English of the Lutheran Confessions. He commended the publisher for sparing "no expense to make (this volume) worthy of our Church and of this Jubilee year."⁴⁴ The first volume, containing the text of the several confessional documents, had appeared the previous year. Too late to commemorate exactly the tercentenary of the original *Book of Concord* (1580), or the 350th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession (1530), the appearance of these two volumes near or on the Luther jubilee made them no less welcome or timely. In fact, they came out as an American appropriation of the scholarship associated with the revival of Lutheran confessional theology in Germany. Short of recounting the rise of a confessional revival in North America, it will suffice to recall that not until 1851 was the *Book of Concord* available in English, the version being that of Ambrose and Socrates Henkel of New Market, Virginia.⁴⁵ It was the young Philadelphia minister, Joseph Augustus Seiss, who pleaded for a new translation of the *Book of Concord* to replace the Henkel version. Charles Porterfield Krauth, having earlier taken part in the translating of Schmid, brought out a new rendition of the Augsburg Confession (1869) and projected a scholarly edition of the entire *Book of Concord*. The two volumes appearing in 1882-33 were thus the outcome of his preparatory labors, as noted by Jacobs.⁴⁶

All this, of course, says nothing about the interpretation given the Confessions by this new generation of English-speaking Lutheran theologians. For a time, at least, Krauth appears to have set the tone, declaring that these documents must be received "in their own, true, native, original, and only sense." We shall come back to this.⁴⁷

Turning to the problem of an authentic biography of Luther in English, the Jubilee year brought a spate of popular accounts. In any case, one would expect the best to come from Germany. Probably the foremost was that by Julius Köstlin, professor of church history at

the University of Halle-Wittenberg. First published in Germany in 1882, his *Luthers Leben* was a popularized version of the two-volume *Martin Luther, sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Elberfeld, 1875) which, in turn, was the product of a promising career of Luther scholarship, including a two-volume treatise on the theology of Luther (1863).⁴⁸ His work had attracted attention among English-speaking Protestants. Köstlin's biography of 1882 appeared in two English versions in 1883. The one, a hurried and uneven translation done by John Gottlob Morris and his friends, was brought out by the Lutheran Publication Society in Philadelphia. It was supposed to take the place of the Luther biography which Charles Porterfield Krauth did not live to complete.⁴⁹ The other, translated with greater felicity of language and published in New York by Scribner, also brought "illustrations from authentic sources," which themselves were the harbingers of a coming harvest of research in Reformation art.⁵⁰

A challenge, meanwhile, had been put to German Protestant scholarship from the Roman Catholic side. A typical encounter was that between Julius Köstlin and Johannes Janssen. The latter began in 1879 the publication of his monumental *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages*.⁵¹ The third volume, dealing with Luther and the "Revolution party," appeared in time for the jubilee year. Like certain earlier studies by Roman Catholic scholars, such as Adam Möhler and his writings on the unity of the Church,⁵² Janssen's work reflected the ultramontanism or confessional revival in Romanism, complete with the romanticism that animated such historiography. This was not simply a matter of depicting the papal church as the "good guys" and the German Lutherans as the "bad guys." Rather, it sought, like John Henry Newman, to recover the character of the late medieval period and to indicate where the Protestant view of the Reformers was partisan, uncritical, and thus not as scholarly as claimed by its protagonists. Naturally, a scholar like Köstlin rebutted Janssen with the sophisticated disdain only certain types of academicians can muster.⁵³ A more extensive critique was that by the Lutheran pastor, Gustav Bossert, editor of a South German historical journal and contributor to the *Verein für Reformationsgeschichte*, which Protestant scholars had formed in 1883 under Köstlin's inspiration.⁵⁴ In a negative way, at least, Roman Catholic ultramontanism was a useful prod to Protestant scholarship, and the effects were felt also in North America. The place where this

was felt most lay not in the realm of biography so much as in the need for a new approach to Luther's works.

A critical edition of Luther's works, complete with the apparatus of modern scholarship, began to appear in 1883 when the first volume of the now famous Weimar Ausgabe (WA) was published. The story of its beginnings can here merely be noted as deliberately part of the jubilee observance in Germany. Inspired by a Berlin teacher's initial efforts to do a critical study of Luther's Small Catechism, Karl Schneider as early as 1853 conceived the plan of a critical edition of Luther's works. Eventually it was not Schneider but Joachim Friedrich Karl Knaake, a military chaplain in Potsdam and (after 1883) pastor in Drakenstedt (Provincial Saxony), who was named editor of this enormous undertaking.⁵⁵ Many scholars had a hand in promoting the project, but none were more influential than Julius Köstlin. A generous grant from the Kaiser, plus advance subscriptions from other countries and from many libraries and scholars in Germany, assured a good beginning. Among the American subscribers were Philip Schaff of Union Theological Seminary and Adolph Spaeth of the still new Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. A special committee also commended the *Weimar Edition* of 1883, though costly, to pastors and churches of the Lutheran General Council for their personal or congregational libraries.⁵⁶

In St. Louis, Carl Ferdinand Walther channeled information through his theological journal, *Lehre und Wehre*, commending the Weimar project. Like other informed scholars, Walther and his colleagues appreciated the Erlangen edition as the product of historical-critical research of the early and middle 19th century, presenting Luther's German writings in 67 small volumes (1826-1857) and his Latin writings in 23 volumes (1829-1861), with five additional volumes appearing later (1884-1886). When it came to a choice, however, Walther and his friends saw the best practical solution for American Lutherans to lie in a republication of the Walch edition. Prepared by Johann Georg Walch, and originally published in 24 volumes (1740-1753) as Luther's *Sämtliche Schriften*, this edition had the merit of comprehensive coverage, updated German, a translation into German of the Latin writings, relevant documents of Luther's contemporaries, and historical introductions that minced no words about the polemical thrust of the Reformer's career. All these features suited the needs of the Old Lutherans. Volume I, Luther's Lectures on Genesis, was regarded as "a short, clear summary of

Luther's teaching, as drawn directly from God's Word."⁵⁷ In 1881 the first two volumes, of an eventually 30-volume offset publication, came off the Concordia presses in St. Louis. Only in 1895 did the third volume appear, leading to a completion of the project by 1910.

While it did little to originate theological scholarship, the jubilee year 1883 did much to underscore the fact that a new era of such studies was under way, and that—especially by means of the emerging Weimar edition—a new era of Luther research appeared to be in the making. All of which serves to highlight the preparatory role of one generation in relation to the next, as well as the place of the anniversary—seen from its political, popular, confessional, and scholarly angles—as a summons to look to the future as well as to the past. In this sense it is instructive to examine the careers of a Krauth, a Walther, and a Schaff as they resume their places in our "Triptych '83."

II

The Luther jubilee of 1883 was a symbol and symptom of change taking place in American church life. So far, our study has exposed relationships and, by implication, has raised questions that anticipate the ecumenical movement of the later 20th century, besides depicting the confessional movements of the 19th century. For it was after about 1840 that massive immigrations from Roman Catholic Ireland and from the Roman and Evangelical areas of Germany were setting the stage for change. For the first time there were interposed, in a hitherto preponderantly English-speaking society of Anglo-Saxon institutions and Puritan-revivalist Protestantism, sizable constituencies representing historic attachment both to the Counter Reformation and to the German-origin Reformation. Small wonder that American nativism bristled at this foreign invasion; that it spawned such reactionary phenomena as the Know-Nothings in political life and the Protestant crusade against Romanism in popular religion.⁵⁸ By their participation in the Civil War and the ensuing Reconstruction era, many hitherto foreign elements became variously Americanized. Roman Catholicism, to which we shall be able to pay only passing attention, found its increasingly prominent place in urban America. Lutheranism, largely transformed from its antebellum denatured form, became confidently, at times aggressively, confessional.

The careers of Charles Krauth, Carl Ferdinand Walther, and Philip Schaff not only coincided with this time of change but also provided major leadership for a Reformation-based understanding of

the church. This is sufficient reason to return to our triptych. This crosscut of history needs the perspective—as space permits—of some biographical lines.

Before looking at each of these men separately, they should be seen together. None of them was a “loner.” Today each of them is remembered within the heritage of a major denomination: Dr. Krauth, in the Lutheran Church in America; Dr. Walther, in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; Dr. Schaff, in the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The significance of each would of course extend beyond his own denomination, contributing to the emerging yet not mutually exclusive patterns of confessionalism on the one hand and ecumenism on the other.

At the outset, how can we visualize our triptychians? To his peers, Charles Krauth was “one of the most delightful of companions, genial . . . sparkling with wit and anecdote.” With his full beard, expansive forehead, thinning hair, and silver-rimmed glasses, he looked the scholar and personified “the elevated tone of a Christian gentleman.”⁵⁹ Carl Ferdinand Walther’s alert eyes and prominent nose marked the unsleeping watchman of doctrinal orthodoxy. His protruding jaw was accentuated by lips that had recessed for his loss of teeth in middle life. His elegantly domed head was wreathed by a nimbus of wisping hair, descending in whiskers behind the high collar meeting his chin. For recreation he favored playing the organ *fortissimo*, and was not beyond a dip in the Mississippi. Philip Schaff, the ubiquitous ecumenist, was undoubtedly the best-looking of the three. Even-featured, clear-eyed, in later years bald, his fringe of white hair and trimmed beard gave him a businesslike distinction such as might hardly be expected in an extraordinarily productive scholar. To his friends he not only looked but also was “the presiding genius of international theology.”⁶⁰

Behind these appearances lay other distinctive personal items. Krauth, a third-generation American, was a master of the English language and its literature. His education in college and seminary at Gettysburg had given him a scholar’s command not only of German but of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. His early interest in philosophy (mainly pre-Kantian) intensified his attachment to dogmatic theology. Walther, who came to St. Louis with the Saxon immigrants at the age of 28, was a Leipzig graduate. To his mastery of the classic languages he added a reading knowledge of English but confined his prolific writing to German. His was an extensive grasp of Luther’s works and of the Lutheran dogmaticians of the 17th century. Schaff, a

Swiss by birth and a German by education, became, as he said, "an American by choice." Educated at Tübingen and Halle, and a theologue of great promise, he gave up his teaching post at the University of Berlin and came to America at the age of 24. At the Mercersburg Seminary of the Reformed Church he early determined to make English the vehicle of his scholarship.

In the development of their careers each of these men counted heavily on the teamwork of colleagues. It is hard to imagine Krauth's successes without the close partnership of men like Beale Melanchthon Schmucker or Joseph Augustus Seiss, friends from student days who were among a still larger group of kindred minds working in the Philadelphia area during and after the Civil War and together promoting on many fronts the cause of confessional—or, as it was also called, High—Lutheranism.⁶¹ Likewise, one could not conceive of Walther's rise to leadership without a circle of erstwhile Leipzig and other well-educated peers with whom he advanced the cause of Old Lutheranism and shaped the "mind of Missouri."⁶² In the case of Schaff, his initial support from John W. Nevin and their joint development of a "Mercersburg theology" paved the way for a career of extraordinarily productive scholarship in which many often obscure colleagues played a vital part.⁶³

This kind of dynamic collegiality was actually prerequisite, if the cause for which these three men stood was to advance against the prevailing stream of American Protestantism. Their cause was a recovery of "the church" as over against a widespread American enthusiasm for "the kingdom."⁶⁴ For a Krauth and a Walther the way of recovery was seen in some sort of confessional Lutheranism. For a Schaff it lay in evangelical catholicity of the kind demonstrated in the Church of the Old Prussian Union where (since 1817) Lutherans and Reformed had come under a common administration and which (since 1834) no longer regarded doctrinal differences as necessarily divisive of church fellowship. Between confessional Lutheranism on the one hand and evangelical catholicity on the other, the middle decades of the 19th century saw plenty of controversy in Germany as well as America, the Lutherans accusing the Evangelicals of "unionism," and the Evangelicals accusing the Lutherans of unchristian exclusivism. Bitterness, after all, was possible because both sides not only placed great emphasis on the nature of the church and its ministry but also on the role of history and the fact of continuity in the life of the church. This emphasis came in marked con-

trast to the generally nonhistorical kingdom-mentality of American Protestantism.⁶⁵ From their various yet allied vantage points Schaff, Krauth, and Walther could take a common stand against the unhistorical efforts of someone like Samuel Schmucker. The elder Schmucker had with his friends been championing an "American Lutheranism." Adapted to American conditions, it was divested of its distinctively Lutheran aspects for the sake of promoting "a plan for catholic union on apostolic principles." While Schmucker's plan had drawn encouragement from the formation of the Prussian Union, it represented the thought of an earlier generation. It failed to take into account the new role of history which had emerged in Germany and did not recognize the integrity of the several confessions which Krauth, Walther, and Schaff—each in his own way—were upholding.⁶⁶

Between Krauth and Walther the relationship was friendly, although correspondence between them was apparently slight. Krauth initiated it in 1858 when he sent Walther a copy of a sermon, and received in return a warm commendation in Latin.⁶⁷ Krauth, so it seems, was as reluctant to write in German as Walther, eleven years Krauth's senior, was to write in English. In 1865, Krauth's credo on confessional fundamentals and his retraction of any unconfessional statements he may have published up to that time was hailed by Walther.⁶⁸ On that score, however, Krauth's growing confessionalism tended to dismay Schaff. Inviting him to address the first American meeting of the Evangelical Alliance (1873), Schaff urged Krauth, "I am quite anxious to have you associated with it, both for your sake and for the Lutheran Church, especially since Dr. [Samuel] Schmucker's death."⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Schaff's life-long friend, William Julius Mann—a colleague of Krauth's on the Philadelphia Seminary faculty since 1864—did not hesitate to chide him. "You are a great admirer," Mann told Schaff, "of Luther's personality, of this heroic figure in the campaigns of the Lord, but you are an opponent of Lutheranism. To call you a heretic is far from my mind. But this I believe, that—unlike true Lutherans—you do not accept the two natures (Godmanhood) of Christ with the earnestness your own theological viewpoints imply. And yet no one has a better understanding than you do of this side of Lutheran doctrine, which is indeed only a consequence of the premises which you acknowledge."⁷⁰

Between Krauth and Walther on the one side and Schaff on the

other, the concerns brought to the Luther jubilee of 1883 thus bore both on the past and on the future. Some further biographical fragments can make this clearer.

Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823-1883), with his fifty-nine years, brought a wide range of accomplishments to the threshold of the Luther jubilee. How differently that event would have been observed, had he lived, is conjectural. In any event, he brought to that year the culmination of a sense of mission that had been deepening and developing in him for more than three decades. This mission, according to his biographer, was to transplant the spirit of genuine Lutheranism into the realm of the English language, and there to reproduce and establish it on such a basis that its future might be secured.⁷¹ The fact that he was officially requested in 1879 to write an inclusive biography of Luther in time for the jubilee gave evidence of his success.⁷² Others shared Krauth's conviction that "a mere literal translation of Lutheran books from a foreign language" would not suffice. The very spirit and life of the Lutheran Church, as he saw it, would have to be worked into the American idiom and outlook. To pursue this goal, he worked persistently on a number of strategic fronts.

One of these was broadly cultural. It included his interests in philosophy and literature. His philosophy was a combination of idealism and realism, basically pre-Kantian in its formulation⁷³ while at the same time endeavoring to relate 19th-century German developments to those in 18th-century Britain. Typical of this intent was Krauth's elaborate edition of George Berkeley's treatise on the *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1874). He prefixed it with his own extensive prolegomena on idealism, including the 19th-century German philosophers. He concluded it with a translation of the critical notes on Berkeley by the German materialist philosopher, Friedrich Überweg.⁷⁴ Similarly, Krauth supplemented his edition of William Fleming's British *Vocabulary of the Philosophical Sciences* (1860, 1878) with an explanation of terms current in German philosophy.⁷⁵ To his professorship in philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania (1868-83) were added the duties of vice-provost of the institution. His membership in learned societies (e.g., the American Philosophical and the American Oriental) proved useful whether serving as an associate editor of Alvin Johnson's *Universal Cyclopaedia*,⁷⁶ or as a member of the Old Testament Company of the committee to revise the English version of the Bible, over which task Philip Schaff was

presiding. For his literary work he was paid, as he admitted, "very handsomely." With his income he purchased more books for his choice personal library.⁷⁷ Outside Lutheran ranks, Krauth was usually identified by his post at the University of Pennsylvania. He carried on a lively exchange with other Protestants, and was especially well received in Princeton as one, by Charles Hodge's admission, unusually well read in Calvinism.⁷⁸ Yet Krauth never hid his confessional identity. To his non-Lutheran friends he was "a Lutheran of the Lutherans."⁷⁹

On the ecclesiastical front Krauth was fully at home and displayed a remarkable leadership in the development of confessional Lutheranism in the English language. The four decades between his initial study of Martin Chemnitz and his last efforts at producing a Luther biography cover the crucial transition from an adaptive "American Lutheranism" to a self-conscious confessional Lutheranism. As the beginning provided a viewpoint for the ending, so it informed many of the undertakings in Krauth's crowded career and fostered the development of a partnership with kindred minds.

For example, the sense of direction which Chemnitz gave to late 16th-century Lutheranism, tempted as it was by an aggressive Reform movement and taunted as it knew itself to be by a post-Tridentine Romanism, needed a renaissance three centuries later in order to confront the vastly different (though confessional) conditions of America. As a theologian, Chemnitz was not creative but conservative, his own *Loci Theologici* (1591) having been an interpretation of Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* (1543 edition) in terms of Lutheran orthodoxy rather than of crypto-Calvinism.⁸⁰ Likewise, his *Examen Concilii Tridentini* (1565-73) was a solid rebuttal of the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent in terms of fidelity to the Scriptures as seen in the Church Fathers and in Reformation Lutheranism.⁸¹ From his father the young Krauth received a copy of Chemnitz's *Loci* in 1843. His careful study of this book, subsequently in the company of young Schmucker, was regarded as a major factor in shaping Krauth's theological views.⁸² Beale Schmucker noted that the change to a confessional Lutheranism came over his friend about 1848 or 1849. As General Synod historian Edmund J. Wolf observed in the late 1880's, "In view of subsequent developments in the church, what a stroke of Providence it must have been to locate youth Krauth and young Schmucker soon after the completion of their training at the Gettysburg institutions, in neighboring towns in the State of Virginia, where, with a standing

engagement to spend together one week of every three months and with regular correspondence during the interval, they jointly studied the doctrines and history of the Lutheran Church." It was there—in Winchester and Martinsburg—that "the theological positions of these sons of Gettysburg professors underwent a powerful change . . . [to which] may be traced the birth of a movement that has affected almost the entire Lutheran Church of this country and permanently changed the stream of her development."⁸³

Krauth's activity on the ecclesiastical front became a campaign for the re-education of English-speaking Lutherans, particularly in the synods affiliated with the General Synod (1820). How much he was actually influenced in this direction by Walther and the Missouri Lutherans is hard to say, although historians of the latter constituency have claimed considerable credit. In the apparent absence of extensive correspondence, for example, between Krauth and Walther, and given their direct connections with confessional leaders in Germany, Krauth and his colleagues followed a self-conscious line. They were indeed aware of confessional developments in the American Midwest and were undoubtedly at times encouraged as well as irritated by them. But while the Midwesterners pursued their goals in the German and Scandinavian tongues, these Easterners were blazing new trails for Lutheranism in English and making adaptations to American needs.

Krauth's later career punctuated the course of confessional Lutheranism. From the time he assumed the editorship of *The Lutheran and Missionary* in 1861 until his death in 1883 a number of events in his own life—often decisions born of deep personal conviction—affected the lives of many others. This was true of his acceptance of the Norton or English professorship in the Philadelphia Seminary, formed in 1864 as a rebuttal to the alleged inadequacies of Gettysburg. Likewise, his statement of confessional fundamentals (1865) gathered the like-minded in his camp. Retracting anything he himself may have written to the contrary, Krauth confessed:

To the true unity of the Church is necessary an agreement in fundamentals, and a vital part of the necessity is an agreement as to what are fundamentals. The doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession are all articles of faith, and all articles of faith are fundamental. Our Church can never have a genuine internal harmony, except in the confession, without reservation or ambiguity, of these articles, one and all.⁸⁴

When the Ministerium of Pennsylvania withdrew from the General Synod (1866), Krauth supplied leadership in creating the conserva-

tively oriented General Council (1867), with its diversified German and Swedish as well as English-speaking elements. Confessionalist that he was, his new translation of the Augsburg Confession, with extensive notes (1869), opened the way for an eventual new English version of the Book of Concord. His collected writings on Luther and the central doctrines of the Confessions appeared under the title, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* (1871), and rallied a wide reading audience. His reply, in the early years of the General Council, to the question of cautious Midwestern brethren concerning pulpit and altar fellowship, eventually stuck in Lutheran history as the "Galesburg Rule" (1875). Adopted by the Council at Galesburg, Illinois, the uncompromising Krauthian logic declared: "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only. Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only. "Any exception to the rule," Krauth explained, "belongs to the sphere of privilege and not of right. The determination of the exception is to be made in consonance with these principles, by the conscientious judgment of pastors as the cases arise."⁸⁵

When asked to make a hopefully clarifying statement on the controversy over predestination that was embroiling Missouri and other conservatives, Krauth held off, hoping that Walther and his opponents would bring clarity as well as charity to their mutually destructive debate.⁸⁶ Meanwhile, Krauth had kept up a steady stream of activity, including his correction of faulty notices about Lutheranism in English-language publications. With such colleagues as Joseph Seiss and Beale Schmucker he promoted a liturgical renewal on the basis of the church orders of the 16th century and a development of church polity in keeping both with American conditions and with confessional standards.⁸⁷

To a champion like Krauth, ardent confessionalists inevitably turned to supply the lack, in English, of a full-scale biography of Martin Luther. Requested by the Pittsburgh Synod in 1879, Krauth was off in the late spring of 1880 for his first and only trip to Europe. With his friend Jacob Fry (of historic Trinity Church, Reading) he toured Britain, France, and scenic western and southern Germany before coming to the heartland of the Reformation. By the time the two travelers reached Saxony and Thuringia they were nearly exhausted but still rhapsodic. Augsburg and Coburg were but preludes to the solid lore of Eisenach, the Wartburg, and Wittenberg. But, as Fry reported, Krauth discovered that "a very large part of his mission to Germany would be omission."⁸⁸

More philosopher than historian, Krauth was also more a partisan

than a researcher. His friends hoped that his biography of Luther would possess "the very features that are missed in Köstlin's."⁸⁹ Indeed, the two-volume *magnum opus* that had come from the scholarly Berlin professor in 1875 was known to some Lutherans in America, who hoped that Krauth would improve on it. In fact, Frederick Krotel editorialized in *The Lutheran* that Krauth was expected to provide a work with "a life-like portraiture, beauty of style and adaptedness to our wants and tastes . . . a life of Luther that would at once rank as one of the best biographies of the day."⁹⁰

Caught in a race between his desire to write and his teaching duties at the University and the Seminary, Krauth found a way out. He would base his own work on the two-volume Luther biography by Köstlin. During 1881 and 1882 he kept writing. By the time he got Luther to the Diet of Worms, he had already filled 400 pages of manuscript.⁹¹ The jubilee year was pressing in on him. His health began to fail. There were ominous signs, then a cessation of activity and complete rest; but to no avail. To this "Lutheran of the Lutherans" death came on January 2 of the year of jubilee.

From his friends the death of Krauth evoked a profound sense of loss. Among the many eulogies, two in particular have interest for us. In St. Louis, Carl Ferdinand Walther recalled for posterity Krauth's statement of 1865 on confessional fundamentals.⁹² In New York Philip Schaff declared, "Our country has produced few men who united in their own person so many of the excellencies which distinguish the scholar, the theologian, the exegete, the debater, and the leader of his brethren, as did our accomplished associate."⁹³

Had he lived to complete it, would Krauth's biography perhaps have been an anti-climax? So far, at least, efforts to locate those first 400 manuscript pages have failed. Perhaps it is just as well. In any case, a full-length postscript was provided by Julius Köstlin himself, who in anticipation of the jubilee had written a popular life of Luther. Basing it on his larger two-volume work, Köstlin published it in 1882 in Germany. As noted earlier,⁹⁴ Krauth's friend John G. Morris and a hurriedly gathered team produced a translation of Köstlin's popular "Luther." Krauth's task was thus fulfilled posthumously by proxy. His lifework, in terms of confessional Lutheranism, fell to the young Henry Eyster Jacobs. Closely associated with Krauth, and a product of the same educational sequence at Gettysburg, Jacobs was installed as Norton Professor on the Philadelphia Seminary faculty in September 1883.⁹⁵ The ranks were closed, the succession assured; or so it seemed.

To Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811-87) the year 1883 was the last of a cluster of Lutheran jubilees into whose observance he threw himself with confessional ardor. As the year began, he asked the readers of *Der Lutheraner* how it was that the tercentenary of the Formula of Concord (1877) or the 350th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession (1880) "were celebrated so quietly or not at all, and that, by way of contrast, the fourth so-called jubilee of the birth of Luther is to be celebrated so generally and even pompously?" Typically, he suggested, "The reason undoubtedly is that it would be difficult not to celebrate those other jubilees without at the same time commemorating also what Luther has taught. This year's jubilee, however, celebrates Luther only as a person, as a man of worldwide historical significance. Thus one can become an enthusiast. . . . Hypocrites have always had a way of erecting imposing monuments to the prophets of God, whose faithful disciples they persecuted. . . ."⁹⁶

In more ways than one, Walther and his peers had grown old in the conviction that their ardent discipleship of Luther had cost them a lifetime of persecution or, at least, had engaged them in interminable controversy with many brands of so-called Lutherans as well as with certain other groups of Protestants. The latter included especially the Evangelical Synod, whose home base was St. Louis and whose ecclesiastical lineage went back to the Church of the Old Prussian Union (1817) and its melding of Lutherans and Reformed. Since these German Evangelicals accepted the Lutheran and Heidelberg catechisms "insofar as they agree," they were the great thorn-in-the-flesh of Missouri Lutherans, to whom nothing mattered more than *die reine Lehre*, the pure doctrine of the gospel as revealed to the world by Martin Luther, God's prophet of the latter days.

Philip Schaff's visit to St. Louis in the spring of 1883 crossed denominational lines and, in his own estimation, was highlighted by the day spent with Walther and his colleagues. With understandable pride Walther showed Schaff the new Concordia Seminary building. It was nearing completion and Schaff marveled at its monumental proportions. He was also impressed by the "rigorous German discipline, and the practical economy which characterized the administration." Most of the day, however, appears to have been spent in discussing the theological controversies of the German churches and the "shades of opinion which separate the different Lutheran bodies in this country."⁹⁷

Among the latter a bitter controversy over predestination was raging through the synods affiliated with the Synodical Conference

(1872), and dampening the spirit of jubilee. For Walther this controversy was particularly disappointing because it had broken out with virulence precisely in that coalition of Lutherans he had succeeded in forming after Charles Krauth had, in effect, stolen a march on him by pressing for the formation of the General Council (1866).⁹⁸ As the mid-seventies had plunged Krauth into soul-searching debate over pulpit and altar fellowship, leading to the adoption of the exclusive "Galesburg Rule," so the late seventies and early eighties enmeshed Walther in an all-out struggle for the correct Lutheran answer to a question which the Confessions had left open. For Walther as much as for Krauth, such experiences were part of a larger process of decision-making which—ironically in America's Gilded Age—would determine the character of Lutheranism.

In the quasi-complimentary jargon of Eastern Lutherans, Walther was one of those "German Lutheran theological scrub brushes" for which the West had become noted. Only since the ending of the Civil War had Lutheranism in the West—or Midwest—emerged as a center of gravity second only to that in the East. The indications were that, given a few more decades, the Midwestern Lutherans would surpass the East not only in numbers but also in the definition of their Lutheranism.⁹⁹ With their layers of history, weight of custom, and acquisition of English, Eastern Lutherans often had difficulty in comprehending their brethren in the West. And with their more recent presence and less encumbered environment, Midwestern Lutherans could give freer play—if they so chose—to surrounding themselves with a maximum of confessional gear.¹⁰⁰

Walther, the recognized leader of those intent upon reliving in America the age of Lutheran orthodoxy, was in his element. For him the jubilee of '83 provided a panoramic vantage point. Some 45 years had passed since the migration of the Old Lutherans from their native Saxony. Their dream of a utopian community on the banks of the Mississippi was shattered with the unfrocking of their once-idolized leader, Martin Stephan. Their concept of the church, debated with German thoroughness at Altenburg, was transmuted from episcopacy under Stephan to congregationalism under Walther, a congregationalism subsequently modified by an ever-expanding synodical organization (1847). For the sake of pure Lutheran doctrine no sacrifice was made to appear too costly. Second only to worship in word and sacrament was education. From parish school to theological seminary—and later to teachers' college—the simplest of

beginnings in 1839 led inexorably from a log cabin to the lofty seminary structure dedicated in 1883.¹⁰¹

Better than anyone else, Walther knew what it had taken to shape not simply the physical properties but also the "mind of Missouri." Like Krauth, Walther operated with a logical consistency. But he pressed beyond Krauth for a total commitment that left few areas untouched. Even though, as an Easterner like Julius Mann surmised, Walther could begin with a relatively clean slate,¹⁰² there was still human nature; and the German, whether natural man or educated theologian, could be stubborn. The pages of *Der Lutheraner* (1844-) developed Walther's skill as educator of the laity as well as of the ministry. For the latter, *Lehre und Wehre* (1855-) was Walther's instrument for cultivating theological thought as well as confessional explicitness. Parish school teachers, after 1865, nourished their minds on the Walther-inspired *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Schulblatt*. Finally, in 1882, *The Lutheran Witness*—put out by men of a younger generation—blazed the trail of "Missouri" into the realm of English-speaking America.

If an 18th-century Lutheran "patriarch" like Henry Melchior Muhlenberg could describe his role as that of "the Lord God's sheep dog," rounding up the scattered flock,¹⁰³ a 19th-century church father like Walther would appear less like a western rancher in a perpetual round-up than as a builder of fences and enclosures. Amid a prevailing denominational disorder appeared Walther's design, more comprehensive and unbending than Krauth's. Among the many things Walther wrote—his sermon volumes sold over 25,000 copies—none was more explicit in fostering an exclusive confessionalism than his little book on the church. Entitled *The Evangelical Lutheran Church, the True Visible Church of God on Earth* (1863), this treatise left no doubt as to where Walther and his fellow Missourians had taken their stand.¹⁰⁴ It was a stand on the inerrant Scripture as interpreted by the Lutheran Confessions as these, in every respect, conform to the Scripture and are its faithful interpreter.

No wonder Walther hailed Krauth's statement on things fundamental to Lutheranism.¹⁰⁵ In 1883, in Krauth's obituary, Walther recalled that statement "as an imperishable monument of the uprightness and candor of [Krauth's] convictions."¹⁰⁶

Krauth, to be sure, had seen with regret how an initially routine inquiry into the Lutheran position on predestination exploded into a full-scale *Gnadenwahlstreit*. Urged to say something hopefully deci-

sive, Krauth nevertheless held off.¹⁰⁷ The fray was a tangle of personal animosities as well as doctrinal explications such as could be bred only in a confessional family feud. It began with a series of essays delivered by a pastor before one of the districts of the Missouri Synod (1868-71), which were then attacked by two theologians of the Iowa Synod (chronically at odds with Missouri over chiliasm). Walther and his colleagues defended their man, and had also the leading spokesman of the Norwegian Synod—the German-born Frederick Augustus Schmidt—on their side. Walther, meanwhile, continued his own series of doctrinal lectures. These were delivered annually before the Western district of the Missouri Synod—the district which included St. Louis. By 1877 he reached the doctrine of predestination. He presented it in such a way as to support the basic premise of his series that "only by the doctrine of the Lutheran Church is God alone given all the glory." From which he concluded that this is "incontestable proof" that the doctrine of the Lutheran Church "alone is true." In 1877 Walther pushed this premise farther and contended that "also in the doctrine of election the Evangelical Lutheran Church gives God alone all the glory." He insisted that nothing the believer is or does, even in view of the faith (*intuitu fidei*) by which he lives, predestines him for salvation.¹⁰⁸

The Synodical Conference, reviewing in 1878 the Proceedings of the Western District, found Walther's statement doctrinally acceptable. Meanwhile, relations between Walther and F. A. Schmidt had cooled. Schmidt had been pushing for a more aggressive promotion of Conference work in the English language and may also have been disappointed over his non-appointment to a professorship in St. Louis. In any event, Schmidt attacked Walther's position on predestination. A colloquy in 1879, arranged by the Conference and held in Columbus, left the issue unsettled and got the Ohio Synod involved. Schmidt, out to prove the correctness of his own views, published a periodical, *Altes und Neues* (1880). At a pastoral conference in Chicago, in October 1880, the stage was set for a long-awaited debate between Walther and Schmidt. Of the 467 persons in attendance, 431 were pastors of the Missouri Synod. Walther, plus the St. Louis faculty, appeared. Schmidt did not. Even so, the pros and cons were argued at great length.¹⁰⁹ Nothing could be settled without Schmidt. The tercentenary jubilee of the Lutheran *Book of Concord* ended in discord.

As the controversy continued, Schmidt and Walther met face to face on two high occasions, once in Milwaukee in the presence of the

St. Louis faculty and the officialdom of the Synodical Conference, and again in Chicago at the regular convention of the Synodical Conference (October 1882). Debate over thirteen theses, drafted by Walther and adopted by the Missouri Synod, failed to produce the desired consensus. What it produced was a methodology for which the Missourians subsequently became known.

Since the entire controversy was supposed to hinge on the testimony of Scripture, the fine lines of debate gave less and less attention to the scriptural context and relied increasingly on proof texts. With Walther, at heart a dogmatician rather than an exegete, this tendency had already become evident in his 1879 edition of the *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* (3rd ed., 1694) by Johann Wilhelm Baier. In amplifying Baier's summation of Lutheran orthodoxy for American purposes, Walther himself became increasingly satisfied with the proof-text method. As a perceptive contemporary Missouri historian has observed, this methodology "shaped the thinking of the Missouri Synod clergy for the next two generations."¹¹⁰

Among other things, and especially in less capacious minds, this method fostered an exclusivism which made subsequent efforts toward Lutheran unity extraordinarily difficult. But in 1883, among Charles Krauth's very last manuscripts was his promised statement on the doctrine of predestination. Quite simply he asks: What is the question? "Is our faith a cause of God's election or an effect of it? . . . Considered as a question of the relation between man and God, the answer would be made one way. Considered as a question covering the case between one man and another, the answer would be reversed." He then went on to explain what these two kinds of answers would be like if seriously developed. Krauth's attempt remains a fragment. It was published in the magazine of which he was briefly the editor-in-chief, the *Lutheran Church Review* (1882-). But his opening observation on the controversy carried good counsel as to how the impasse between brethren could be overcome. He observed:

If the disputants of the Synodical Conference agree upon a statement, made in simple good faith, as to what are the points on which they are one, and what are the points on which they differ—we may hope for final peace. Till they can do this, the more they discuss the doctrine of election the more they will muddle the mind of the Church, and the further they will be from a decision.¹¹¹

Krauth did not agree with the charge that Walther and his party were crypto-Calvinists, as if hiding something that they had secretly

espoused, or as if revealing a theological affinity of which they were not aware. In less complicated terms, a later observer might note how the impasse of the disputants over predestination was in fact an ironical stalemate. Both sides agreed that God was to have all the glory for saving man. But each side insisted, with unbending pride, that its own was the humbler way. Perhaps an impasse such as this was sooner or later inevitable, given Walther's starting point that "only by the doctrine of the Lutheran Church is God alone given all the glory." Man indeed has his limitations, and to have this lesson brought home precisely in a year of Luther jubilee was undoubtedly a humbling experience. If so, perhaps Walther was hedging when he editorialized, "This year's jubilee . . . celebrates Luther only as a person. . . ." Nor can Luther's descendants, his spiritual Epigoni, claim to be anything more than that.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's characterization of American Protestantism as a "Protestantism without Reformation"¹¹² is not too different from what Philip Schaff had begun to say in 1844 and adhered to during the rest of his life. For, as James H. Nichols points out, Schaff's argument with the prevailing sectarian or American-style Puritanism was on three counts: (1) it was prone to spiritualize the faith and thus to be hostile to form in religion; (2) it was unhistorical and lacked respect for the past, imagining that it could substitute primitive Christianity for the historical and on-going catholicity of the church as expressed in the Reformation; (3) it was unchurchly in that it put the accent on conversion and by-passed the reality of the church as the medium through which faith is brought to the believer and the context in which that faith is to be lived.¹¹³

Like some other 19th-century high churchmen, Schaff anticipated the modern ecumenical movement. It may be misleading to call it ecclesiastical romanticism, but the "Mercersburg theology," which he and his colleague John W. Nevin propounded, envisioned the Church's catholic unity and proposed to act upon this vision. Schaff called it by various names, but the Protestant or evangelical catholicism of which he spoke immediately upon his arrival from Germany was more than an exotic importation. Not unlike the Anglican Edward B. Pusey or the Lutheran Theodor Kliefeth, Schaff's interest in history informed his understanding of the church. From those who thought they had it made in their snug denominationalism his concern for the wholeness of the church brought charges of heresy, handily refuted by those in the German Reformed Church who grasped what he meant. Schaff made clear that he saw evangelical

catholicity in terms of historical progress or ecclesiastical development.¹¹⁴ To him the diseases of the church were rationalism and sectarianism, the one being a theoretical subjectivism, the other a practical subjectivism. A Pusey or a Kliefeth, he thought, was reacting to these diseases but was not providing a remedy. In his *Principle of Protestantism* (1845), Schaff asserted that "the Reformation is the legitimate offspring, the great act of the Catholic Church; and on this account [is] of true catholic nature itself." By failing to follow the divinely indicated beckonings of history the Church of Rome has, he claimed, "continued to stick in the old laws. . . ." Besides, that church's "fixation as Romanism has parted with the character of true catholicity in exchange for that of particularity."¹¹⁵

Seen by a later generation against the then-prevailing denominational thinking, Schaff's *Principle of Protestantism* has been appraised as "one of the most significant events in the history of the American church."¹¹⁶ To him the formation of the Church of the Old Prussian Union was an exciting move in the right direction. In its combining of Lutherans and Reformed it marked a "great step . . . toward the catholicity and unity necessarily involved in the idea of the church itself." To be sure, he could see in "the stiff, absolute Old-Lutheranism of Prussia and Bavaria . . . a salutary reaction against the indifference of many of the friends of the Union to doctrines."¹¹⁷ For America he asked, "May we hope to see our Protestant Zion conducted safely out of the Babylonish captivity of sectarianism and faction, without being carried to old Rome or young Oxford?"¹¹⁸

To Lutherans in the United States, Schaff reacted variously. For those like Samuel Schmucker who advocated an unconfessional "American Lutheranism" he could muster little interest; their passion for church unity was, as he saw it, unhistorical and contrary to the catholic concern presupposed by a proper understanding of the Augsburg Confession. Except for the Formula of Concord, which he regarded as divisive, Schaff was better disposed toward the emerging Lutheran confessionalism he found in that other Gettysburg theologian, Charles Philip Krauth, and in the latter's son, Charles Porterfield Krauth.¹¹⁹ The best indicator of Schaff's relation to Lutheranism, however, lay in Wilhelm Julius Mann, with whom he carried on a lifelong correspondence. Mann had come to America from Stuttgart at Schaff's urging. Together they had edited *Der Deutsche Kirchenfreund* (1848-59), the first learned German church journal in

the United States.¹²⁰ After his brief stay in Mercersburg, Mann for a time served a German Reformed congregation in Philadelphia before being called to Zion Church, which Muhlenberg had long served. Like Schaff, Mann was cool toward "American Lutheranism," but subsequently became an ardent confessional Lutheran.¹²¹ At the Philadelphia Seminary, after 1864, Mann occupied the so-called German professorship and provided invaluable support to Krauth. Despite Schaff's encouragement to switch to English, Mann adhered to German and thus circumscribed his potential contribution to American Protestantism in general and Lutheranism in particular.¹²²

By contrast, Schaff's career became the embodiment of evangelical catholicity in American Protestantism. His move in 1865 from Mercersburg to New York, his transfer of membership to the Presbyterian church, and his call to Union Theological Seminary in 1870 dramatized his transition to wider usefulness. More than ever he was to his friends in Germany the interpreter of a living church in America. To his friends in America—and to his opponents—he was the advocate of a catholicity in which the historic confessions and confessional churches have their place. For the sake of an informed striving for unity, Schaff's career was devoted to acquainting the American denominations with the church's past. To be sure, he saw this past through the eyes of "the principle of Protestantism" and a developmental understanding of church history.¹²³ He implemented its promise through a reactivated Evangelical Alliance. To American Protestants his scholarly and practical activity offered rich resources from a Reformation-oriented heritage. A few of his lines of achievement should be briefly noted here.

The historical line was highlighted by Schaff's famous *Church History*.¹²⁴ Initiated in 1851, it covered the history of the church from apostolic times through the Reformation of the 16th century. Revised and enlarged, the last of its six volumes appeared in 1892. As historian, Schaff perpetuated the school of the University of Berlin's noted scholar August Neander. But he also held a developmental concept of history, for which he was indebted to Hegel, as set forth by the trail-blazing church historian Ferdinand Christian Baur, founder of the second "Tübingen School."¹²⁵ Schaff's sense of the historical thus gave expression to his understanding of the validly confessional vis-a-vis a sectarian understanding of the church.

The biblical line found Schaff teaching New Testament exegesis at Union Theological Seminary. There, aided by collaborators, he com-

pleted the translation of the 25-volume Bible commentary by Johann Peter Lange, the Reformed luminary at the University of Bonn.¹²⁶ In 1870 he also began his chairmanship of the American committee on revising the English version of the Bible, doing so in company with other American scholars, among whom Charles Porterfield Krauth represented the Lutherans. The whole project, based in Schaff's study at the headquarters of the American Bible Society, was carried forward in closest collaboration with a parent committee in England.¹²⁷ For Schaff this experience strengthened his already numerous ties with British scholars and churchmen. It also enabled him to compare how much more boldly biblical revision was carried forward in the English-speaking world than it was at the same period among erudite German scholars. The latter, in attempting to revise the translation of the famed Luther Bible, found their presumably greater learning a drawback when it came to altering a version even more revered than the King James. Schaff's culminating service in the biblical field was his reference work, *A Companion to the Greek Testament and the English Version*, which appeared in the jubilee year 1883, and which at least one reviewer welcomed as indispensable for students and pastors.¹²⁸

In the confessional line, Schaff brought out, in 1877, the immediately hailed *Creeds of Christendom*. The more formal title, *Bibliotheca Symbolicae Ecclesiae Universalis*, summed up the fact that this was indeed a library of confessional documents such as had not hitherto been available to students of the church catholic. Here again the author was the protagonist in America of a new field of study.¹²⁹ Comparative symbolics was gaining momentum in Germany and dealing in a new way, on the Roman Catholic as well as on the Protestant side, with the study of the official doctrinal confessions of faith. In the minds of confessional Lutherans, for example, such study led to an accentuation of differences and the fostering of a *dissensus* which preferred to draw comparisons rather than to engage in outright polemics.¹³⁰ For Schaff, the *Creeds of Christendom* provided a means of recovering an understanding and appreciation of the one universal church underlying and overarching all confessional or creedal differences.

In the reference line, he edited between 1882 and 1884 *A Religious Encyclopaedia*. Its subtitle gave its purpose and pedigree, indicating this work to be a "Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology, based on the Real-Encyklopädie of Herzog, Plitt and Hauck." Aiding Schaff in the editing were Samuel

M. Jackson and David Schley Schaff, the editor's son. Criticism, especially from the side of America's confessionally sensitive Lutherans, was inevitable, especially of the first volume; but subsequent reviewers expressed satisfaction over improvements.¹³¹ In any case, the *Encyclopaedia* filled a long-felt need and did probably as much as any single work to break down old walls of isolation and to make American Protestants aware of their brethren on the European continent as well as in Britain.¹³² A companion work, for the orientation of seminary students, was his *Theological Propaedetic* (1893). A general introduction to the study of theology, this was based on earlier German works and was the first of its kind in English.¹³³ Mention must also be made of Schaff's role in two projects designed to aid ministers and theological students in their historical studies. The one was *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, a multi-volume project launched in 1886 and carried forward in two series totaling 28 volumes.¹³⁴ The other was the *American Church History Series*, the first of an ultimate 13 volumes appearing in 1893, the year of Schaff's death.¹³⁵ Both of these undertakings provided resources that were to be standard equipment in ministerial libraries for the next half-century. For the Roman Catholic volume, Schaff held high hopes. To Dr. John O'Gorman at the Catholic University in Washington he wrote, "I sincerely hope that the contemplated series [will] tend to remove ignorance and prejudice and bring Christians nearer together."¹³⁶

Schaff mastered the fine art of teamwork. Joining his own amazing productivity to that of others, and exercising his capacity for planning as well as for supervising, he was able to mass-produce materials essential to initial and continuing theological study. Even though his own generation and its type of scholarship have gone into eclipse, the energy of such enterprise and the scope of such achievement call for equivalent vision and enterprise in our own time. Schaff was a scholarly generalist without peer, especially as the provider of teaching tools.

In the organizational line, Schaff promoted the formation of the American branch of the Evangelical Alliance (1867), helping to bring American Protestants of various denominations into contact not only with each other but also with their counterparts in Europe. Here was ecumenism, not at the level of official participation by ecclesiastical bodies but at the level of personal involvement. The American conflict over slavery had deferred progress toward a branch of the Alliance in this country. Likewise, the rise of confes-

sional awareness in the second half of the 19th century gave the Alliance a more churchly outlook than it had when, for example, a Lutheran like Samuel Schmucker became one of its ardent proponents in 1846. The 1873 meeting of the Alliance in New York was the first occasion to bring a fair number of European churchmen and scholars to a worldwide gathering in America, and Schaff was responsible for inviting them and bringing them over. He was also present at subsequent international conferences of the Alliance in Basel (1879), and Copenhagen (1884). At the latter meeting his address on "The Discord and Concord of Christendom" brought a strong advocacy of the "union of Christendom." This would not be brought about, he warned, "by a crusade against denominations. . . . The evil [of division] lies not in denominationalism and confessionalism, but in sectarianism Denominationalism or confessionalism grows out of the diversity of divine gifts, and may coexist with true catholicity and large-hearted charity. But sectarianism is an abuse and excess of denominationalism and is nothing but extended selfishness."¹³⁷

Schaff saw clearly that denominational pluralism in America could and did lead to such excesses and was thus guilty of sectarianism and institutionalized self-seeking. But to him those denominations with a strong confessional legacy—like the Lutherans and the Reformed—had an obligation to be concerned for other denominations not thus gifted. In this spirit he gladly participated in the formation (in London, 1875) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches adhering to the Presbyterian System. If American Protestantism was a "Protestantism without Reformation," it was men like Schaff who sought to make amends. No one did more than he to make available to America's Protestants something of the rich legacy that should also become part of the goodly American heritage. His performance has never been surpassed; neither has it been equaled—and in this respect he succeeded perhaps too well.

In a way not immediately apparent yet demonstrably real, the three men in the triptych of 1883, though seldom seen together, actually belong together. Their common bond is a concern that the denominations in America be genuinely confessional, in contrast to being selfishly sectarian. To Krauth and Walther, this meant confessional particularism. To Schaff it meant confessional generalism. In either case, the concern carried with it an awareness of history and an orientation toward catholicity. Schaff's lifelong friend, Wilhelm Julius Mann, recognized that Schaff did not like Lutheranism but

that he liked Lutherans.¹³⁸ Krauth's successor, who began his career at the Philadelphia Seminary as the new academic year opened in 1883, was Henry Eyster Jacobs.¹³⁹ Falling heir to some of Krauth's associations, Jacobs became a friend of Schaff and a collaborator in the American Church History Series which Schaff planned.

At the Schaff memorial meeting (1893) of the American Society of Church History—an association of scholars which Schaff had been instrumental in organizing—Jacobs noted Schaff's contribution to a confessionally aware Lutheranism in America. "In the powerful reaction that came in the Lutheran Church in America, leading it back towards its historical foundations, the influence of Dr. Schaff," said Jacobs, "must be regarded as a very important factor." This is not to imply that Schaff was in full sympathy with the results reached. Schaff was not a Lutheran, and he never ceased to protest against certain peculiarities in the Lutheran Church. Thus Jacobs continued his appraisal of Schaff:

He did not admire, we regret to say, the Formula of Concord; he was never convinced that the Lutheran Church did not teach consubstantiation; he introduces protests against the Galesburg Rule at most unexpected places in his books. But there is not a Lutheran scholar in America, especially among those who use the English language, who does not owe Dr. Schaff an inestimable debt.

With an eye to the role of the church historian in furthering the unity of the church, Jacobs sees theology itself as "an historical science, and it cannot be understood except by an historical interpretation." He continues:

If the differences which separate Christian men are ever to be adjusted, it might be by the discriminating study of the mode in which the various Church parties and the various Church doctrines have assumed their present forms. The result will be often that seeming agreements will be found to be heaven-wide disagreements, and, conversely, seeming contradictions will be found to be harmonies.

As if to lend encouragement even to a study like this present one, Jacobs concludes, "Everything in Christianity must be brought to the touchstone, not only of holy Scripture, but also of history, and of a history so conscientious, that no link is overlooked and no fact suppressed. The influence of this high standard of Dr. Schaff, which the Lutheran Church felt so soon, has pervaded an ever widening circle among the Christian scholars in America."¹⁴⁰

The Krauths, the Waltherns, and the Schaffs have had many descendants. In the year of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation

tion, with even Roman Catholics joining in the observance, an ecumenism is upon us which gives special relevance to a triptych of 1883 melding three theologians not usually seen together.¹⁴¹

N O T E S

¹ Henry E. Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (New York: Scribner, 1893), p. 417.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Protestantismus ohne Reformation," *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, (Munich: Kaiser, 1958), I, 323-354. Also in *No Rusty Swords*, ed. Edwin H. Robertson, trans. by Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper, 1965), pp. 93-118.

³ David S. Schaff, *The Life of Philip Schaff*, (New York: Scribner, 1897), p. 12.

⁴ Henry F. May, "The Recovery of American Religious History," *American Historical Review*, LXX (1964-65) 79-92. Cf. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., *The Rise of the City: a History of American Life* X (New York: Macmillan, 1933). A trail-blazing account of the Reconstruction period, providing a context also for religious developments.

⁵ James H. Nichols, "The History of Christianity," in *Religion*, ed. Paul Ramsey (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Harcourt-Brace, 1965), pp. 155-217, esp. 159.

⁶ *Bibliographie der Lutherliteratur des Jahres 1883* (Frankfurt/Main, 1884). Cited in Schaff, *Religious Encyclopaedia*, III (3rd ed., 1891) 2013.

⁷ The classic exposition of the Reformation's significance in mid-19th century historiography was that of Leopold von Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation*, four vols. (1839-1847). In English, *History of the Reformation in Germany*, trans. Sarah Austin (one vol.; Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1844). As Paul Joachimsen points out, Ranke's interest in the writing of history was prompted by his reaction to the mediocre quality of the publications appearing in 1817 in honor of the Reformation's tercentenary. The 22-year-old Ranke began with a probing of Luther's works, and in 1817 was still writing his initial "Luther fragment," out of which grew his subsequent classic on the Reformation. Joachimsen also notes Ranke's sensitivity to the role of time, of the historical moment when decisions are made that shape the future. The historian is thus also a dramatist who deals dynamically with his subject. On these grounds one can appreciate Ranke's maxim that in the writing of history the form emerges from the subject matter. (Or, as Frank Lloyd Wright said about architecture, "form follows function.") See Joachimsen's edition of Ranke's *Deutsche Geschichte* (Leipzig: Henkel, 1933), I, x, xii, xiii ff. Also his own significant monograph, *Die Reformation als Epoche der deutschen Geschichte* (Munich: Kaiser, 1951) and the comment by Otto Schottenloher, pp. xi-xii.

⁸ Wilhelm Pauck, *Heritage of the Reformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1950), pp. 215 ff. See also Pauck's assessment of "Theology in the Life of Contemporary American Protestantism," in *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich*, ed. Walter Leibrecht (New York: Harper, 1959), pp. 270-83.

⁹ Donald H. Yoder, "Christian Unity in Nineteenth-Century America," in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), esp. pp. 241-47, "The Ecumenical Impact of the American-German Churches."

¹⁰ Joseph McSorley, *Father Hecker and His Friends; Studies and Reminiscences* (St. Louis: Herder, 1953), pp. 91 ff. The campaign of Hecker and his Paulist Fathers got fully under way after 1865.

¹¹ Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860; a Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Macmillan, 1938; also Chicago: Quadrangle, 1964). It is here indicated that Luther had become a popular hero of English Protestants during their country's long struggle in the 16th and 17th centuries against the danger of a return to Roman Catholicism. But Billington, at least in his reference to Luther, is not a careful scholar, in the tradition of his mentor, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. He has Luther writing a preface for Robert Barnes's *History of the Popes* [sic], which is actually an upgrading of Barnes's *Confession* (reprinted in the Erlangen Edition of *Luther's Works* 63, 396-400). This leads to a much worse blunder when he writes: "Luther not only endorsed the writing of this form of propaganda, but actively co-operated in a collaborative church history published by a group of Magdeburg scholars in 1559 [sic]." Luther died in 1546, and the plan as well as production of the *Magdeburg Centuries* must be credited to Mathias Flacius.

¹² Vernon L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought; an Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920* (3 vols.; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927), I, II, 70, 100. Of the many addresses in 1883, see those published under the "Luther Memorial," *Addresses by Edward E. Hale, James Freeman Clarke, C. Carroll Everett, C. W. Ernst, at the Meeting of the Suffolk Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, to Celebrate the Birth of Martin Luther* (Boston: Smith, 1883), 49 pp.; cf. also David A. Buchler, "The Influence of the Reformation upon Civil Liberty," *Lutheran Quarterly Review*, New Series, XIV (January 1884) 113-27.

¹³ *The Lutheran* (April 5, 1883) pp. 216-17. *Lutheran Encyclopedia* (New York: Scribner, 1899), p. 297. Cf. the bitter scorn of Fr. Isaac Thomas Hecker, *The Catholic World*, XXXVIII (October 1883) 6-7.

¹⁴ Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States* (3 vols.; New York: Harper, 1950), I, 103-04.

¹⁵ He lived 1819-88. Walter Elliott, *The Life of Father Hecker* (New York: Columbus, 1898), pp. 1 ff. See also Vincent F. Holden, *The Yankee Paul, Isaac Thomas Hecker* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1958), p. 7.

¹⁶ Isaac Thomas Hecker, "Luther and the Diet of Worms," *The Catholic World*, XXXVIII (November 1883) 145-61.

¹⁷ Ralph H. Gabriel, *The Course of American Democratic Thought; an Intellectual History Since 1815* (New York: Ronald, 1940), pp. 62, 64, places Hecker in perspective.

¹⁸ E. Theodore Bachmann, "The Rise of Missouri Lutheranism" (University of Chicago dissertation, 1946) pp. 3-4. Cf. A. L. Graebner, *Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in America* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1892), pp. 664-65.

¹⁹ *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches*, ed. F. K. Wentz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965). For further material on Schmucker, see A. R. Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967).

²⁰ Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment; the Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper, 1963), p. x.

²¹ *History . . . of the Sixth General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance*, held in New York, October 2-12, 1873, eds. Philip Schaff and Irenaeus Prime (New York: Harper, 1874), p. 8.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 174 ff.

²³ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (2d ed., revised; New York: Scribner, 1892), V, 730.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.* Cf. Schaff's participation in "A Symposiac on Martin Luther," by the professors of Union Theological Seminary (New York, Nov. 19, 1883), pp. 21-26.

²⁶ *The Catholic World*, XXXVIII (November 1883) 145-46.

²⁷ The festivities in Philadelphia's Academy of Music exemplified high quality if one is to give full credence to informed accounts. See the *Life of Adolph Spaeth*, Told in his own Reminiscences, etc., ed. by his wife, Harriett Reynolds Spaeth (Philadelphia: General Council, 1916), pp. 231-37.

²⁸ G. F. Krotel was one of the editors. There were numerous contributed reports and letters, from early spring through autumn 1883. See pp. 216, 329, 344, 360, 387, 393, 424, 442, 632, etc.

²⁹ *Ibid.* (April 5, 1883), p. 216; (November 15, 1883), p. 724.

³⁰ Ernest William Olson, *Olof Olsson; the Man, His Work, and His Thought* (Rock Island: Augustana, 1941), p. 203.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-82.

³² G. Everett Arden, *The School of the Prophets; the Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary, 1860-1960* (Rock Island: Augustana, 1960), p. 203.

³³ Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower; Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years . . . 1839-1964* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965), pp. 72-74.

³⁴ *Der Lutheraner* [St. Louis] (September 15, 1883) p. 137.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

³⁶ *Ibid.* (September 1, 1883) p. 134.

³⁷ D. S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 339. Schaff first visited St. Louis on his initial trip through the West in 1845, cf. pp. 136-37.

³⁸ Adolf Spaeth, *D. Wilhelm Julius Mann, ein deutsch-amerikanischer Theologe; Erinnerungsblaetter* (Reading, Pa.: Pilger, 1895), p. 77. Mann's letter to Schaff, December 5, 1884, reproaches him for "hating a convinced confessionalism," while at the same time "delighting in denominationalism." Earlier, December 20, 1869, Mann pointed out Schaff's contrariness, as it seemed, in this way, "Du bist ein grosser Bewunderer der Persönlichkeit Luthers, dieser Helden-gestalt in den Kriegen des Herrn, aber Du bist ein Gegner des Luthertums," p. 77. Again, March 12, 1887, Mann frankly told Schaff, "Ich halte Dich allerdings für einen Gegner des Luthertums aber für keinen Feind der Lutheraner," p. 77. This helps to illuminate Schaff's meeting with Walther and his colleagues.

³⁹ D. S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 339. Further information on this unusual visit appears to be unavailable. The Rev. August Suelflow, archivist of the Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, has made a careful search which, thus far at least, has turned up nothing. (As of January 1967. E.T.B.) See also Ludwig Fuerbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years 1864-1944* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1945), pp. 87-88. The author was a student in Concordia at the time.

⁴⁰ *Der Lutheraner* (November 1, 1883) p. 161.

⁴¹ Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 84.

⁴² See, e.g., H. L. Baugher, "Theological Education in the Lutheran Church in the United States," *Evangelical Review* [Gettysburg], I (1849-50) 19-38. Baugher's article opposed the proliferating of theological seminaries, of which, he says, the Lutherans in 1849 had seven. One good one, he claimed, would suffice, p. 29. Cf. Abdel Ross Wentz, *Gettysburg*

Lutheran Theological Seminary, I, History, 1826-1965 (Harrisburg, Pa.: Evangelical Press, 1965), pp. 170-71. Wentz does not mention this part of Baugher's article.

⁴³ *Documents of American Catholic History*, ed. John Tracy Ellis (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1962), p. 412. The Catholic University of America was founded in 1887.

⁴⁴ *The Book of Concord; or, The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; Translated from the Original Languages, with Notes*, edited by Henry E. Jacobs (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Frederick, 1882 and 1883). The major part of the editor's work was done while still teaching at Gettysburg College. Reference to the jubilee year: II, 6.

⁴⁵ Younger native-American theologians in the East were trying to close the gap between the Lutheran name and the Lutheran substance. To that end they founded the *Evangelical Review*, a quarterly which began publication in Gettysburg in 1849. These "young Turks" were becoming increasingly confessional in their understanding of Lutheranism. To them the Lutheranism of their teacher, Samuel Simon Schmucker, was quite un-Lutheran, and they openly said so. The stimuli for such a reaction came not only from confessional Lutheran works imported from Germany. What was psychologically even more encouraging was the stand taken by the Mercersburg theologians, John W. Nevin and Philip Schaff. Nevin's book on *The Mystical Presence* (1846), published only two years after Schaff's arrival, pointed out the centrality of the Lord's Supper for all denominations and deplored its neglect in usage or distortion in interpretation. What he said about the Lutherans was a thinly veiled censure of Schmucker and his friends. Nevin charged that the Lutheran Church, as they were then portraying it to fellow Americans, "can hardly be recognized indeed as the same communion. The original name remains, but the original distinctive character is gone. Particularly is this the case, with a large part at least, of the Lutheran Church in our country. We cannot say of it simply, that it has been led to moderate the old sacramental doctrine of the church, as exhibited in the *Form of Concord*; it has abandoned the doctrine altogether." *American Christianity; an Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, ed. H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, Lesserts A. Loetscher, II, 1820-1960 (New York: Scribner, 1963), p. 95.

On the confessional Lutheran side, for example, the *Dogmatik der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, by the Erlangen professor, Heinrich Friedrich Ferdinand Schmid (1843), first began to appear in English installments in the *Evangelical Review*. Young Charles Porterfield Krauth was one of the translators. His later notes and marginalia aided Henry E. Jacobs and Charles A. Hay in preparing the work for publication, the first edition in 1876, the second in 1889. This work of Schmid's was complemented by Jacobs' translation of Leonhard Hutter's *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum* (1610) in 1868, for it drew heavily for definitions and citations on the Lutheran Confessions as well as on Melanchthon and Chemnitz while Schmid confined himself largely to the 17th-century dogmaticians of Lutheran orthodoxy. Luther, ironically, was not much quoted amid this confessional revelry.

In contrast to these developments, the efforts of Schmucker and kindred spirits to develop a distinctively "American Lutheranism" was, if not a lost cause, at least premature. His "American recension" of the Augsburg Confession and his Definite Synodical Platform (1855) found only limited acceptance. See Virgilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology* (New York: Century, 1927), on the "Platform," pp. 185-235:

on the "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession" (text), pp. 351-71.

Meanwhile, Schmid's *Dogmatic* became to Eastern Lutherans like Krauth what Wilhelm Baier's *Compendium theologiae positivae* (1694) became to Walther and his Missourians.

⁴⁶ *The Book of Concord* (Jacobs ed.), II, 6.

⁴⁷ Theodore G. Tappert, "The Symbols of the Church," in *What Lutherans Are Thinking*, ed. by E. C. Fendt (Columbus: Wartburg, 1947), pp. 343-67. In describing critically four different positions taken by 19th-century Lutherans in America, Tappert implies that Krauth's position on the Confessions was not invulnerable; yet he does not include Krauth among his four case studies, p. 349. (See *infra*, note 34.)

⁴⁸ *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (abbr. hereafter as *SHERK*), VI, 369.

⁴⁹ *The Lutheran* (April 26, 1883) p. 257. Spaeth, Krauth, II, 362.

⁵⁰ *The Lutheran Quarterly Review* [Gettysburg], XIV (April 1884) 328-29.

⁵¹ *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, VIII, (Freiburg, 1879-1894). English trans. in 12 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner; St. Louis: Herder, 1896-1907).

⁵² Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838), *Die Einheit der Kirche, oder das Prinzip des Katholizismus* (1825; 3d edition, 1843). Möhler, whose meteoric rise has still left its mark on German Roman Catholicism, not only had a strong influence on ultramontanism in Germany but fostered the development of symbolics (instead of polemics) as a field of theological study. The effect of Möhler has been felt ecumenically, finding perpetuation in the "Johann Adam Möhler-Institut für Konfessions- und Diasporakunde" (1957). *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (abbr. *RGG*), 3rd ed., IV, 1068-69.

⁵³ *Luther und Joh. Janssen, der deutsche Reformator und ein ultramontaner Historiker* (Halle, 1883).

⁵⁴ *SHERK*, XII, 550. *RGG*², V, 1481. G. Bossert, *Wuerttemberg und Janssen* (Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 1884), vols. 5, 6.

⁵⁵ *RGG*², III, 1098. Otto Albrecht, "Zur Vorgeschichte der Weimarer Lutherausgabe," *Lutherstudien* (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1917), pp. 29-65.

⁵⁶ Report of the 16th Convention of General Council in New York (1883) pp. 75-76.

⁵⁷ *Dr. Martin Luthers sämtliche Schriften* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1881), p. vi. A number of reasons undoubtedly accounted for the 14-year delay between the appearance of Volume II and that of Volume III. There were editorial problems. The Walch edition was not easily Americanized, especially when cross-referenced with the Erlangen Edition and with the original Walch. There were financial burdens. Experienced German scholars such as the Leipzig professor, Christoph Ernst Luthardt, wondered whether the Missourians could swing their Walch, noting that a family fortune had been lost in producing the Erlangen Edition. The latter was quoted by Walther from the *Theologisches Literaturblatt* in his own journal, *Lehre und Wehre*, XXVIII (March 1882) 140-41. There was, besides, the new competition of the Weimar Edition. Walther admitted that good sense suggested a wait-and-see policy. After all, it was optimistically expected that the *WA* would perhaps be completed by 1917 and would amount at most to 40 volumes. *Lehre und Wehre*, XXIX (February 1883) 63.

⁵⁸ Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, esp. pp. 380-430.

⁵⁹ *Historical Account of the Work of the American Committee of Revi-*

sion of the Authorized English Version of the Bible (New York: Scribner, 1885). Statement prepared by the Rev. T. W. Chambers, minister of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, New York City, p. 66.

⁶⁰ Mann, *Erinnerungsblätter*, p. 73.

⁶¹ Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, II, 154. See also B. M. Schmucker, "Memorials . . ." *Lutheran Church Review*, II (1883) 254, 260, 267.

⁶² E. T. Bachmann, "The Rise of Missouri Lutheranism" (Chicago: University of Chicago Ph.D. dissertation, 1946), pp. 125-48.

⁶³ D. S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, *passim*. Nichols, *Romanticism in American Theology*, pp. 107-39.

⁶⁴ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper, 1937; Torchbook ed., 1959), pp. 176-81. Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 3. Schaff, *The Principle of Protestantism*, trans. from the German by John W. Nevin, 1845, ed. by Bard Thompson and George H. Bricker, "Lancaster Series on the Mercersburg Theology," I (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1964). Schaff's 112 "Theses for the Time," pp. 219-34, summarize his position of the moment and indicate the line of development his future thought was to take.

⁶⁵ Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Samuel Simon Schmucker, *op. cit.* See Wentz's statement on Schmucker's "ecumenical career," and the background of his *Appeal* (1838).

⁶⁷ Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, I, 300.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 114.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 322.

⁷⁰ Mann, *Erinnerungsblätter* (December 20, 1869) p. 77.

⁷¹ Spaeth, *op. cit.*, I, (1851) 172.

⁷² *Ibid.*, II, 361.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, II, 270-281, esp. 277.

⁷⁴ Krauth's prolegomena, covering over 140 pages, placed Berkeley in the development of philosophical thought, defined idealism, and traced its development from Berkeley "to the present," meaning a summary for students of the significance of Hume, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Jacobi, Hegel, and Schopenhauer.

Krauth made use of Friedrich Überweg, the University of Königsberg philosopher who was author of the then widely used *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, subsequently translated as *A History of Philosophy, from Thales to the Present Time*, (2 vols.; New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1877), for use as part of a series being edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Boynton of Union Theological Seminary. Krauth praised Überweg's critical acumen with regard to Berkeleyan idealism, and was aware of Überweg's change, in his later career, to a position espousing a type of philosophical materialism. Krauth's personal library contained a specially bound copy of Friedrich Albert Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, Vol. 2, Part 2 in *Geschichte des Materialismus seit Kant* (Leipzig: Baedeker, 1875). The pages dealing with Überweg (23-75, 514-29, 531-36) bear Krauth's laconic marginalia. (In Philadelphia Seminary Library, 146.M42.) Today, the Marxist scholars in the German Democratic Republic designate Überweg as an historian of philosophy who was a favorite of the bourgeoisie but whose prowess as a logician led him to a form of materialism, i.e., to an image-character of form that is basically materialistic, without, however, pressing his thought to its logical conclusion. See *Meyers neues Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1964), VIII, 238.

⁷⁵ Charles P. Krauth, *A Vocabulary of the Philosophical Sciences; Including the Vocabulary of Philosophy, Mental, Moral, and Metaphysical* by William Fleming, from the 2nd ed. of 1860, and the 3rd of 1876, ed. Henry Calderwood (New York: Sheldon, 1878). Krauth's first edition of Fleming appeared in 1860, in a smaller format.

⁷⁶ Spaeth, *Krauth*, II, 323.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, on infant baptism in Calvinism, pp. 317-19.

⁷⁹ T. W. Chambers, *supra*, n. 59.

⁸⁰ "Chemnitz, Martin," *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (3rd ed.), III, 802-03.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 802.

⁸² Spaeth, *Krauth*, II, 160.

⁸³ E. J. Wolf, *The Lutherans in America* (New York: Hill, 1889), pp. 445-46. See also B. M. Schmucker, "Memorial . . . Krauth," *Lutheran Church Review*, II (1883) 260-61.

⁸⁴ Spaeth, *Krauth*, II, 115.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 204-05.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 327.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 155; II, 190.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 365-81, esp. 367.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 361-62.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 362.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, II, 377.

⁹² *Ibid.*, II, 114.

⁹³ *Lutheran Church Review*, II (1883) 274.

⁹⁴ *Supra*, nn. 48, 49.

⁹⁵ *The Lutheran* (May 1883) p. 344; (September 27, 1883) p. 617.

⁹⁶ *Der Lutheraner*, (January 1, 1883) p. 1. E. T. Bachmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-94.

⁹⁷ D. S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

⁹⁸ Spaeth, *Krauth*, II, 183 ff.

⁹⁹ Mann, *Erinnerungsblätter*, p. 193.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 193, 194-97.

¹⁰¹ E. T. Bachmann, *op. cit.*, 260 ff., 280-89. Meyer, *op. cit.*, esp. chaps. 2-4, pp. 23-88, details the growth of the theological seminary in St. Louis.

¹⁰² Mann, *Erinnerungsblätter*, p. 197.

¹⁰³ Paul A. W. Wallace, *The Muhlenbergs of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), pp. 34-40.

¹⁰⁴ C. F. W. Walther, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche die wahre sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden* (St. Louis: Barthel, 1863).

¹⁰⁵ Spaeth, *Krauth*, II, 114.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 326-27.

¹⁰⁸ Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75. Cf. *Verhandlungen des westlichen Districts* (1877), pp. 20-23.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹¹¹ Spaeth, *Krauth*, II, 328-31.

¹¹² Bonhoeffer, *op. cit. supra*, n. 2. Bonhoeffer was absorbed, as was Schaff, with the problem of "the unity of the Church and the denominations," pp. 94-118.

¹¹³ Nichols, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-26.

¹¹⁴ Schaff, *The Principle of Protestantism*, ed. by Bard Thompson and George Bricker (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1964), pp. 7-17. For

Schaff's account of the Protestant principle as a positive force in terms of the material and the formal principle of the Reformation see pp. 75-124. Cf. Nichols, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-26.

¹¹⁵ Schaff, *The Principle of Protestantism*, pp. 73-74.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹¹⁹ D. S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

¹²⁰ In anticipation of later developments in Schaff's position, the statement in which he and Mann announced the purpose in publishing *Der Deutsche Kirchenfreund* is very instructive. "With all our heart," they said, "we side with all the articles of faith of an ecumenical Christianity (as set forth in the creeds). . . . We make the positive principle of the Reformation our own . . . and confess our agreement with that trend in German theology which represents . . . a strong movement toward a universal Church of the Apostles' Creed." They anticipated for America "a churchly Reformation of modern Protestantism . . . in which the churchly elements of the German Reformation would find acceptance in contrast to the currently present ultra- and pseudo-Protestantism." The editors saw the chief task of the times to be the building-up and promoting of church unity after a long and painful period of separation. Schaff's own developmental concept of church history found expression in the hope that "unity will gradually evolve from within, offering itself as the result of the entire past history of the Church and receiving into itself all the historic branches of the Church" (I, 4-5).

¹²¹ In a hitherto unpublished letter Mann confided to Schaff his opinion of the leader of "American Lutheranism." Writing in English on October 4, 1882, he said: "You wanted some eminent Lutherans for your Encyclopedia. I mention [John Christopher] Kuntze, who of all the Lutheran theologians in this country was without doubt the most learned, *facile princeps*. He published among other things a pamphlet wherein he proposed a shorter way for calculating lunar eclipses. He was well versed in *Orientalibus*.

"Looking to the influence a man exercises, Dr. S. S. Schmucker ought to be mentioned. He certainly was not a learned man and has done his share to emasculate Lutheranism, which proves what a shallow mind he had. But he sent hundreds of men out to work in the Church, most of them, I am afraid, as shallow as he was, and more so, if possible.

"I do not think you have in your Encyclopedia room for more Lutherans. Muhlenberg you have. Also Kuntze and S. S. Schmucker. You could devote only a few lines.

"I am in work up to my ears, but am happy in it. So are you. That is right. Truly yours, J." (Mann-Schaff Corresp. in Krauth Memorial Library Archives, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia).

¹²² Theodore G. Tappert, *History of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, 1864-1964* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1964), pp. 48-49. Cf. David S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 137. That Mann was well aware of the strategic value of English is evident from the encouragement he gave Schaff to use the language of the land. While Schaff, writing in German, was working on his first major work, *Geschichte der apostolischen Kirche*—which marks the starting point of his eventual *magnum opus*, the *History of the Christian Church*—Mann on April 2, 1850, asked: "The question has given me some concern as to whether you are actually promoting the desired purpose by bringing out your work in *German*. You are probably anticipating a pretty good sale

of it in Germany. This is understandable, and in this respect I should like to see it so. But I wonder whether a German edition of your work, printed in this country, would not actually become a hindrance to the end you have in view. Whatever is edited in German in this country seems ready to be ignored. Would to God, that your Church History will experience a better destiny!" Spaeth, *Wilhelm Julius Mann, Erinnerungsblätter*, pp. 83-84.

¹²³ Besides Nichols, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-39, two unpublished dissertations bear on this subject. Klaus Penzel, "Church History and the Ecumenical Quest; a Study of the German background of Philip Schaff" (New York: Union Theological Seminary, Th.D. dissertation, 1962); especially, in connection with this present essay, the treatment of Schaff's emphasis on "evangelical catholicism," pp. 306-42, including his rejection of "American Lutheranism" and acceptance of the place of Lutheran confessional development, pp. 325 ff. See also, George H. Shriver, "Philip Schaff's Concept of Organic Historiography Interpreted in Relation to the Realization of an 'Evangelical Catholicism' Within the Christian Community" (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Ph.D. dissertation, 1960. Microfilm).

¹²⁴ *History of the Christian Church* (6 vols.; rev. ed.; New York: Scribner, 1882-92; reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950). Emerging out of the heat of controversy generated by the "Mercersburg theology," the literary starting point of Schaff's *History* was twofold: *The Principle of Protestantism as Related to the Present State of the Church*, trans. John W. Nevin (Chambersburg, 1845), and *What Is Church History? A Vindication of the Idea of Historical Development*, trans. Edward D. Yeomans (Philadelphia, 1846). These works set the stage for Schaff's major historiographical venture, an account of the church over the centuries as seen in the light of its beginnings and essential catholicity. The logical starting point was his *Geschichte der apostolischen Kirche* (Mercersburg and Philadelphia, 1851). A second, enlarged edition appeared in Leipzig in 1854. This was preceded in 1853 by an English version, which Schaff's friend Yeomans had translated. As is well known, Schaff's *History*, extending through the Reformation era, became the fullest account available in English. Its major competition was Heinrich Kurtz, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte* (1849), first published in English translation in 1855 as a *Manual of Sacred History*. Kurtz, a Lutheran of the Erlangen school, later in life, as he told Schaff, became "emancipated from strict confessional Lutheranism." D. S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

¹²⁵ On the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary as a teacher, the theological faculty of the University of Berlin honored Schaff as the leading exponent of the school of Neander, *ibid.*, p. 465. But the influence of F. C. Baur's Hegelian developmentalism is amply evident, as pointed out by Nichols, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-69, 116 ff, 120-21, as well as in the longer study by Penzel, *op. cit.* The First Tübingen school was marked by supernaturalism, with which S. S. Schmucker identified.

¹²⁶ "Lange, Johann Peter," *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, VI, 411.

¹²⁷ J. B. Lightfoot, Richard C. Trench, and C. J. Ellicott, *The Revision of the English Version of the New Testament*, with an Introduction by Philip Schaff (New York: Harper, 1873), pp. vii-xxiv.

¹²⁸ "A Manual of Textual Criticism," wrote Schaff, "of the Greek New Testament and its application to the English Version is a desideratum of our literature, and meets a demand which has been greatly stimulated and widely extended by the appearance of the new Revision," p. iii. See, e.g., the glowing notice in the *Lutheran Church Review*, III (1884) 153.

¹²⁹ On the emergence of symbolics as a field of study, and its descent

from the earlier discipline of polemics, the article by Kattenbusch notes Schaff's *Creeds*. *Realencyklopädie*,³ 19:204-07.

¹³⁰ Two reviews—among others—in Lutheran journals give some indication of the welcome this work was accorded; yet not uncritically, because *Creeds* omitted the Formula of Concord. *Lutheran Quarterly Review*, III (October 1877) 618-20; appreciation and criticism are balanced in a review, apparently from Germany, included by Walther in *Lehre und Wehre*, XXIII (1877) 237-43.

¹³¹ *Lutheran Church Review*, II (1883) 154-57, deplored the idea that Volume I presented a “watered down” version of Lutheran subject matter, as if to make it more palatable to an American “Methodistic” public. It was charged that such adaptations were a disservice to scholarship. Volume II showed marked improvement; the article on Luther was by Julius Köstlin; those on Lutherans in America were by informed Lutheran scholars in this country. Volume III was highly commended, especially Schaff's article on the Reformation and his appended discourse on the Luther jubilee. *LCR*, III (July 1884) 238.

¹³² Schaff, like Krauth, was an associate editor of the Alvin Johnson *Cyclopaedia* (*supra*, n. 76) and some other reference works.

¹³³ *Theological Propaedeutic*. A general introduction to the study of theology (4th ed.; New York: Scribner, 1898), 596 pp. Based on Schaff's lectures on the subject, this work also provides a useful overview of the development of the theological curriculum.

¹³⁴ This series was a sequel to the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. The latter was translated originally by scholars in Edinburgh (1867), then edited by Arthur Cleveland Coxe and published in an American edition by the Christian Literature Society, 1885-87. The *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (first series, 14 volumes; New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1886-90; second series, 12 volumes; New York, 1890-1900), reflected Schaff's interest both in the early church and in the unity of the church.

¹³⁵ Published under the auspices of the American Society of Church History, which Schaff had been instrumental in forming in 1888. See Leonard W. Bacon's treatment of movements toward church unity in the latter part of the 19th century, *A History of American Christianity* (New York: Christian Literature Society, 1897), VIII, 398-420.

¹³⁶ Schaff to O'Gorman. Quoted in D. S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

¹³⁷ *Report*, Copenhagen Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, and the Scandinavian meeting in New York, 1884, p. 27.

¹³⁸ American Society of Church History, *Papers*, Sixth Annual Meeting, 1893, p. 18.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Asserted by Wilhelm Pauck in 1952, the point has no less relevance today amid the tide of ecumenism that has flowed from Vatican II. “It is apparent,” he wrote then, “that one of the major lacks that must be fulfilled by contemporary Protestants is to develop a doctrine of the church which convincingly states the Christian conviction that Christians are a ‘peculiar people.’ It is gratifying to know that the activities of the World Council of Churches are primarily directed toward the accomplishment of this end” (p. 213). “The Idea of the Church in Christian History,” *Church History*, XXI (1952) 191-213.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD ON LUTHER

ERNEST B. KOENKER

MARTIN LUTHER became accustomed to expect vilification from the camps of assorted enemies. They ferreted out what they considered to be his weaknesses. He was "Brother Softy" or "Light-Stepper" to the Enthusiasts, while to the Roman Catholic camp he was the "Son of Iniquity" and a "Mangy Monk."

Luther could usually deal with such defamation adequately, if not always with reserve. Yet he would have been not a little intrigued by the charges one of his own reluctant heirs was to make three centuries later from a provincial bulwark of "Lutheranism." Soren Kierkegaard's judgment of Luther culminates in the charge that he was "muddle-headed," "no dialectician," and the "patient" of Christianity. But these epithets, so intimately associated with Kierkegaard's evaluation of Luther, can be most misleading. There are whole clusters of problems connected with each of them. Kierkegaard the dialectician was led to say both "Yes" and "No" to Luther. Why? And why does he say "Yes" in his published writings—very sparingly, to be sure—while he says "No" so frequently in his private writings? And why does the "No" also mean in one sense a resounding "Yes" to the great Reformer, on Kierkegaard's own grounds?

As Hermann Diem has pointed out, it was only following 1847 that Kierkegaard devoted himself energetically to the reading of Luther, but in his random concern he "confined his interest almost completely to Luther's sermons."¹ This same year marks an increasing emphasis on the external realization of Christianity. Pure interiority now requires an external renunciation of the world, before the world.² It is by way of "repetition" that earthly life is revolutionized in its relation to the divine. Following the inner, painful break with this world the Christian is restored to the task, within the spheres of everyday life, "of relating himself absolutely to the absolute *telos* and relatively to the relative *telos*." Kierkegaard began to read Luther's sermons for his own edification because, as Eduard Geismar observes in his study of Kierkegaard's evaluation of Luther, the way of "repetition" must lead through a more integral appropriation of the forgive-

ness of sins; Luther was the only person who could lead him further along this way.³

Viewed in the light of recent Luther-research, Kierkegaard's *Lutherbild* is attenuated and programmatic, always reflecting more of Kierkegaard than of Luther. But he was a most perceptive and incisive critic. It was because he shared so much with Luther that, as we shall see, he must break with him on the very points for which he commends Luther. We cannot be oblivious to what Martin Buber terms "a qualitative difference between the two epochs."⁴ However, we should examine Kierkegaard's own evaluations of the Reformer in order to determine precisely what his explicit view of Luther was.

THE POSITIVE EVALUATION OF LUTHER

The vigor and profusion of Kierkegaard's criticism of Luther can easily obscure both the depth and extent of his appreciation for the Reformer. Kierkegaard had a profound appreciation for what he considered to be Luther's valid insights, and though the criticism overshadows the guarded expressions of indebtedness, such positive expressions are at the same time both implicit and explicit. By considering the explicit statements it should also become clear how extensively his succinct Luther-approval places Kierkegaard's vast literary output into Luther's debt.

1. Luther—and Lutheranism—are, indeed, "correctives."⁵ They are not the whole, but they are a necessary ingredient in the whole; they are not the norm, but they are needed to rectify the norm. Just as Kierkegaard saw himself as the "pinch of cinnamon" needed to add flavor to the whole, so Luther also is ever acknowledged as a necessary flavoring, a correction, a safeguard against the "flavorless" Catholic establishment. Kierkegaard uses many figures for this correction. Just as he describes Lutheranism as a necessary buttress attached to the building of Catholicism so he never doubts but that Luther was needed to fashion such a buttress.⁶ Luther opposed what was exaggerated, what was patently false. He was a magnificent and solitary witness to the truth.

In other words, Luther represents an "extreme" over against the excesses of Catholicism.⁷ Kierkegaard never questions the fact that it was necessary for Luther to counteract such an exaggerated development. He introduces his demurrer only when the tension is slackened, when the extreme "became a kind of result."⁸ This is illustrated for Kierkegaard by Luther's view of marriage:

He should have understood that his marriage was an exceptional action, a corrective; he should therefore, as I have said somewhere in my journal, have married, say, an ironing board. I mean that he should simply have taken care to make the fact clear that though he was a monk nevertheless he married. The important thing is not the woman, but that an awakening was necessary.⁹

Luther is evaluated positively because he provided just this awakening, this corrective. He broke with the universal ethical and thereby prodded others to reexamine their actions and motives.

2. Kierkegaard can also laud Luther because "in contrast to Catholicism Luther emphasized the gospel."¹⁰ He goes on to characterize this as a "high spirituality," but it is also clear that he sees Luther's rediscovery of the gospel as a matter of relieving anxious consciences: "Christ, he adds, came into the world in order to calm anxious consciences."¹¹ Regardless of all the reprehensible features which Kierkegaard associates with this contribution of Luther it should not be overlooked that he recognized the fearful state of Luther's own conscience and the legitimate role of the gospel of Christ in appeasing an accusing conscience. This is apparent in the following summary: "The Middle Ages went further and further astray in stressing the aspect that Christ was the model—then came Luther and stressed the other aspect, that Christ is a gift which must be received through faith."¹² In November 1849, Kierkegaard is quite in agreement with Luther: good works do not make the good man, but the good man produces good works. It is faith that makes the good man.¹³

3. Kierkegaard does not spend any considerable time in cataloguing Luther's merits, but it should not be overlooked that he points to these solid merits in passing, in the course of pressing his attack upon Christendom. Thus he applauds Luther because of "the freedom he fought for (and in this fight he was right) . . ."¹⁴ Evidently he has the Luther of *The Freedom of the Christian Man* in mind. He approves of everything involved in the assertion that the Christian man is the free lord of all, subject to none, through faith. We shall see later that he cannot be so affirmative with regard to Luther's comprehension of the complementary thesis in the treatise. But the assertion of the Christian's essential freedom is no small thing in his eyes. As a variant of this point is Kierkegaard's crediting Luther for having abolished the pope.¹⁵ The pope symbolizes for Kierkegaard, as for Luther, the whole network of captivity imposed by ecclesiastical authority. But this positive evaluation on Kierkegaard's part of what was basically a negative work, i.e., Luther's destruction of

papal universalism, reveals how limited was Kierkegaard's penetration of Luther's thought-world. Kierkegaard shared a quite typical, early-nineteenth-century perspective uninformed by a highly original Luther research which has developed a portrait of the Reformer on the basis of vastly more extensive documents than Kierkegaard could consult.

4. In place of the pseudo-authority of the hierarchical institution Luther is acknowledged as possessing another authority. Kierkegaard writes, "When one reads Luther one gets the impression, rightly enough, of a sure and certain mind, of one who speaks with a decision that is "authoritative" (he preached with authority—*exousia* (Matt. 7:29)."¹⁶ What Kierkegaard understands by this authority is clarified later in the *Journals*, where it is connected with the word; for Luther, he says, "true faith clings to the word no matter who the person is."¹⁷ It is evident in both these passages that Kierkegaard has reference to Luther's sermons. He preaches "as though the lightning were continuously striking down behind him."¹⁸ The assurance and certainty found here has a positive aspect about it, though Kierkegaard is very much disturbed by something in this certainty. Because he sees a link with the unique authority described by Matthew he cannot but credit Luther with a positive grasp of the New Testament proclamation.

5. Like a kind of leitmotiv in the Luther passages runs the reference to "Luther's fear and trembling and temptations."¹⁹ Clearly, in the extremities of Luther's *Angst* Kierkegaard sensed an affinity with his own anguish. He sees nothing unauthentic in Luther's struggle, either in depth or extent: "After a score of years, filled with fear and trembling and temptation, which were so terrible that—note well!—scarcely one individual in each generation experiences it in this way . . ."²⁰ This was an *Urgrauen*, a primal dread, which made of Luther's struggle an *Urerlebnis*. In *The Concept of Dread* one finds Kierkegaard probing the forms of *Angst*, and he reflects Luther's conviction that only the person who is overwhelmed by dread can reach freedom and faith.²¹ Again and again Kierkegaard reminds the problematic reader of his intimate *Journals* that "there is not one individual in each generation who experiences this as Luther did."²² The constant and overwhelming onslaught of *Anfechtungen* made faith for Luther not some kind of intellectual exercise or sterile possession but something related, at least, to the "objective uncertainty" which Kierkegaard connected with faith. In the face of this awesome "presupposition" of Luther, Kierkegaard is quite will-

ing to accept Luther's conclusion "that the fear of God consists of cheerful readiness to enjoy life."²³

6. Kierkegaard also sees, approvingly, a dialectical element in Luther's faith. To be sure, "the dialectical factor has been taken from Luther's doctrine of faith," but it must have been present if the misfortune of Christianity is to be connected with the catastrophic removal of dialectic.²⁴ Luther's protest was made in continual dialectical tension with a perverted version of Christian faith, "people forget entirely that Luther was urging the claims of faith against a fantastically exaggerated asceticism."²⁵ Luther, then, deserves the encomium which was for Kierkegaard no small praise: he was a dialectician.

7. In one of the *Journal* entries Kierkegaard draws a vigorous parallel between one of his own key categories and one he is surprised to find in Luther:

Strange! The category "For you" (subjectivity, inwardness) with which "*Either-Or*" ends (only *that* truth edifies which you feel to be the truth) is exactly like Luther's. Actually, I have never really read anything by Luther. But now I open his "Book of Homilies" and immediately in the lesson for the First Sunday in Advent I find the place where he says "For You"; that is what matters.²⁶

Luther had undergone an inner discipline that was infinitely exalted; he was schooled to a most remarkable degree in "the presupposition which can produce the Lutheran truth in me."²⁷ Kierkegaard finds this truly remarkable; few men in any generation have anything approaching it. The *pro me* in Luther stands out against all ontologizing and objectifying influences that would introduce *rigor mortis* into faith itself. Kierkegaard finds in Luther one who charted accurately the rough seas of the religious life: "Luther established the highest spiritual principle as sheer inwardness."²⁸

To conclude this survey of Kierkegaard's positive reading of Luther we should simply note how very positive this reading is. Although Luther was no Socrates, yet "for the rest Luther has all my respect . . ."²⁹ This amounts to no small accolade, coming from so sharp and consistent a critic as Kierkegaard. But it is reinforced by an entry in the *Journals* from Saturday, April 22, 1848: "Today I have read Luther's sermon for this date in his series. It was the gospel about the ten lepers. Indeed, that man Luther is the master of us all."³⁰ Again in *For Self-Examination*, a product of 1851, Kierkegaard showers the highest praise upon Luther:

Then there stepped forth a man, Martin Luther, from God and with faith. With faith (for verily faith was needed for the task) or

by faith he reinstated faith in its rights. His life was an expression of works—let us not forget that—but he said, “A man is saved by faith alone.” The danger was great. How great it was in Luther’s eyes is shown most conspicuously by the conclusion he came to, that in order to put things to rights the Apostle James must be shoved aside. Just think of Luther’s reverence for an Apostle!—and then that he must venture to do such a thing as this to get faith reinstated in its rights!³¹

Here Kierkegaard’s evaluation of Luther the theologian and reformer is most explicit. He enjoyed divine approval for his mission, reinstated faith to its place, was himself a man of faith busy in works, skirted danger courageously and successfully, but succumbed in his efforts because he yielded to the temptation to discard the truth of James.

THE CRITIQUE OF LUTHER

In spite of his recognition of Luther’s very basic contributions, Kierkegaard could not avoid an attack upon Luther, once given the attack on the Christendom of his day. Yet it is important to see the critique in its intimate and dialectical relationship to his positive evaluation of Luther. Precisely because he could approve of Luther’s corrective activities in each of the points sketched above did he find it necessary to attack Luther, on these very points, when the dialectical tension Luther so rightly represented was broken. Luther’s faults lay in the same areas as his strengths. The crucial formula in each instance is the “and yet.” We should now examine the areas where Luther is condemned and relate them to those areas where he is commended.

1. Luther—and not simply a later development within Lutheranism—is held accountable for making a corrective into a “norm, the whole.”³² Correction is for Kierkegaard essentially one-sidedness. When what the corrective was meant to correct no longer exists, then the “corrective” ceases to be correction and becomes something quite different. When the counter-action of “corrective” on the “corrected” and of the “corrected” on the “corrective” is disturbed, one begins to have the devil to pay, “and as long as this continues things get worse with each generation until in the end the corrective produces the exact opposite of what was originally intended.”³³ It becomes a new *status quo*. The transformation of Protestantism into a norm has given rise to untold confusion.³⁴ Protestantism—or Lutheranism—was forged in the strain and heat of battle; when the

battle subsided it might be seen whether Protestantism could exist by itself without protest, safely ensconced, in a land where no Catholicism lingers as a counterforce. But precisely there it may be seen that this "corrective" transformed into a "norm" leads to a corruption of which Catholicism is quite incapable. The form of corruption into which Catholicism degenerates is hypocrisy; that produced by Protestantism is "spiritless worldliness."³⁵ Had Luther been satisfied to be a corrective and, like Kierkegaard himself, refused to propose new forms, he might have avoided this distortion. But he was carried away by his own sense of importance to become the re-former of Christianity. Pure worldliness can be honored in Protestantism, where the "ridiculous" protest of the monastery has been dispensed with, and it can thus be identified with "true religion"; in Catholicism, however, where the witness of asceticism and fasting are still given and there are monks and preachers vowed to poverty, the farcical debauchery of Christian faith can never be confused with undefiled religion.

In other words, when Luther broke with the monastery—and this is, significantly, Kierkegaard's repeated phrase—he could not clearly see the truth that lay in the falsely exaggerated monasticism he opposed. The false exaggeration obscured the actual measure of truth still present in the monastic ideal of forsaking the world. It was not the emphasis on asceticism that was at fault but the Medieval preoccupation with merits and its restriction of its ideal to the extraordinary individual. An example is Luther on marriage. Luther quite properly roused people by his marriage, but this very corrective, "this salt," was transformed into a norm: "But instead Luther became the head of all that throng of philoprogenitive men, who trust him and believe that it is a part of all true Christianity to get married."³⁶

2. Luther's emphasis on the gospel, which in his day produced pastors who lived in remarkable evangelical poverty, later led to a most remarkable trickery of "high spirituality."³⁷ The free gospel, easy grace, and the merits of Christ helped people get rid of Christianity, which is sheer suffering. The gospel which Luther discovered in most profound *Angst* was turned into an efficient tranquilizer. Luther was responsible for all of this comforting preaching: "What a comfort it is to read Luther: Here, surely, is a man who can keep abreast of one, preach one farther away from the path instead of calling one back."³⁸

3. With regard to the freedom Luther proclaimed, this also was

distorted. Luther may be charged with enthroning not simply the freedom of the Christian man as he turns personally and as a solitary individual to God; he introduced into religious life that sickening democracy which claims that *everyone* can and does take the fearful risk of turning to God as a single person. Luther reduced the price of Christianity, and the millions flocked in. He should have made the problem of living out the Christian life harder for the selfish crowd; it should have been made "infinitely more strenuous than it was before."³⁹ Then he would have avoided the throngs of self-seeking charlatans. But as it happened, Luther's overthrow of the *pope* resulted simply in the enthronement of the *public* in his place. The positive evaluation of Luther's struggle to restore man's freedom is replaced by the frightful mask of the crowd, that leveling monster that abolishes personality.

4. One may scarcely suppose that Kierkegaard would carry the unusual authority or certainty Luther exhibited in his preaching into the condemnation of the Reformer. But with remarkable consistency he sees here, too, something most reprehensible. In Luther's certainty Kierkegaard discerns something very disturbing—it is nothing less than grave uncertainty in Luther:

It is common knowledge that a particular state of mind often tries to conceal itself beneath its opposite. One encourages oneself with strong words, and the words become even stronger because one is hesitant. That is not deception, but a pious wish. One does not even wish to express the uncertainty of fear, one does not wish (or dare) even to name it, and one forces out the very opposite mood in the hope that it will help.⁴⁰

It is evident that this analysis of Luther's assurance is built on psychological arguments. Kierkegaard does not engage in a theological analysis of Luther's view on the problem of faith in its relation to unfaith, or the role of Satan in inspiring doubt, or the adhesion of faith to the man Christ Jesus. Kierkegaard's frank and appreciative perception of certainty in Luther is also deeply permeated with the dialectic of "Yes" and "No." He sees in the hard-won certainty of Luther's faith something which reveals psychological instability rather than the courage attendant on Christian faith.

5. What could Kierkegaard possibly find lacking in Luther's fear, trembling, and temptations? In Luther himself he finds nothing lacking. Still, he says, "this principle only too easily becomes untruth, terrible untruth."⁴¹ It is made into a "principle" for everyone. However, he observes, "there is not one individual in each genera-

tion who experiences this as Luther did."⁴² The result is the most widespread deceit. How can the development be avoided that every person will "ascribe this Lutheran inwardness to himself"?⁴³ Kierkegaard finds that the unique, soul-searching anguish Luther experienced in the most authentic manner conceivable is transformed into a "principle." This "inwardness" becomes, in its expropriation by his followers, a shrewd act of trickery which attempts to shroud worldliness in the guise of authentic religious testing. It is an instance in which the corruption of the best produces the worst.

6. As we have seen, Kierkegaard acknowledges Luther to be a dialectician. But in the *Journals* he says that in Luther one also sees the result of the removal of the dialectical factor.⁴⁴ On the one hand, Luther had stressed the necessity of saving faith, but, on the other hand, he had held in creative tension with such a faith an emphasis on good works and mortification of the flesh. Luther's championing of faith occurred in the face of a bloated, sickly asceticism—something he experienced personally in a degenerate monasticism. Yet Luther himself is condemned by Kierkegaard for championing a distorted conception of faith which became a "hiding-place for sheer paganism and Epicureanism."⁴⁵ The marvelous "gift" of faith rendered any exertion on the part of the believer unnecessary. Faith, says Kierkegaard, was cut off from its proper relationship to Christian asceticism; good works have become unnecessary. Thus what Luther began in unrelieved opposition to a fatuous asceticism ended as a fatuous, one-sided reliance on the *sola fide* principle which became a cloak for blatant worldliness. In Kierkegaard's day Luther would be the first to give a little prominence, in accordance with the Apostle James, to good works in the name of faith, quite in contrast to his well-known predilection for St. Paul; he would call a halt to the prostitution of "grace," to its use as a pretext for unqualified worldliness.⁴⁶ Here Kierkegaard's critique of Luther refuses to take the more charitable position of holding later Lutheranism responsible for the shift: Luther himself is the culprit, says Kierkegaard, since he failed to think dialectically.

7. Kierkegaard sees in Luther's vigorous "for you" a parallel to his own call to subjectivity and inwardness. But already in Luther all was not well:

Luther established the highest spiritual principle as sheer inwardness. This can become so dangerous that we can sink to the lowest paganism (for extremes meet), in which sensual debauchery is honored as divine worship. So Protestantism can reach the point at

which worldliness is honored and esteemed as—true religion. And this, I maintain, cannot happen in Catholicism.⁴⁷

Like the other positive elements in Luther's contribution, his "for you" was also subject to distortion; what was authentic, experienced, and "infinitely exalted" became in the person of Luther, when it was accepted as a "result" without Luther's own presupposition, simply another instrument for fakery. In the possession of "the crowd" it inevitably became untruth.

What, finally, was the measure of the man Luther? Even here the dialectical element is not lacking. He was a man of heroic proportions, to be sure. But when measured against the arch-heroic, he stands in wretched contrast. Kierkegaard expresses admiration for Luther as "master of us all." But he could not avoid seeing Luther as a poor second in relation to Socrates, who was "a true reformer."⁴⁸ Luther was no Socrates "by far." Socrates stood at the apex of human achievement: "Oh, of all human beings the greatest is old Socrates, hero and martyr of intellectuality. You alone, Socrates, knew what it meant to be a reformer, understood your own self in so being; you were one."⁴⁹ Socrates refused to be carried away by his own sense of mission to suppose he could be more than a corrective, a solitary witness, a midwife serving at the birth of truth. He became a reformer simply because he refused to patch new forms into the old structures.

Luther had a similar opportunity but bungled his chances. Socrates, like a true reformer, was put to death, "and the true reformer is always put to death as though he were the enemy of mankind."⁵⁰ But, in this respect, Luther's standards were not high:

Luther really did incalculable harm by not becoming a martyr. . . . By stopping halfway Luther lowered the standard of being a reformer and in that way gave birth in later times to that crowd, that rag, tag, and bobtail of nice soft-hearted men who also, in a way, want to do a little reforming, item: he gave birth to the confusion of being a reformer with political help.

The result has been appalling confusion among the highest concepts and the most dangerous demoralization of all, as is naturally the case when something so fine, so noble, so subtle, and so delicate as the concept 'reformer' putrefies.⁵¹

For Kierkegaard nothing can excuse Luther for failing to attain the crowning death of a true reformer; as Dupré puts it, "instead of dying for his protest against the established state of affairs, he created a new *status quo*."⁵²

We have juxtaposed Kierkegaard's positive and negative evaluations of Luther in order to determine whether a pattern might be plotted from the contradictory views. We see, first, that approval and critique revolve about identical features in Luther's thought and work. Secondly, the approval is metamorphosed into critique because of a distortion in measure. The delicate balances between elements or "moments" in Christian faith which must be held in counterpoise were thrown askew when Luther gave his prescriptions. The critical failure in each case does not involve a failure to diagnose properly or even to prescribe proper treatment; it is a matter of excess, of a lack of proper measure. Thus a salutary corrective administered massively, without proper understanding of the total physiological effects, leads to glutting the entire system; the comforting, healing power of the gospel administered unilaterally, without reference to the complementary action of the spiritual sickness, transforms the gospel into a cheap tranquilizer, and so we may proceed with each topic from freedom to martyrdom. Thus Kierkegaard's choice of the categories of "patient-diagnostician-physician" with respect to Luther is not fortuitous. When it came to prescribing a cure for the patient (Christendom) Luther showed himself to be a barbarian; he went to extremes: he either went too far, or, in the case of avoiding martyrdom, he failed to suffer consistently. He could not prescribe an adequate remedy because "he does not have the doctor's overall view."⁵³

THE CRUCIAL CATEGORIES: A CLOSER EXAMINATION

We may now shed some light on Kierkegaard's interpretation of Luther if we examine certain of the former's key categories and the manner in which Luther failed to attain or conform to the Kierkegaardian ideal. Kierkegaard's categories are what must comprise the norm, but it is his judgment on Luther that concerns us in relation to these categories.

On our subject one of the most significant *Journal* entries from Kierkegaard's later years is one in which he compares his own dialectic of faith with that of Luther:

Luther arranges it rightly in the following way: Christ is gift—to this corresponds faith. However, He is exemplar—to this corresponds imitation.

But more exactly one should say: (1) imitation, tending towards a decisive action in which the situation originates for becoming a Christian; (2) Christ as gift—faith; (3) imitation as fruit of faith.⁵⁴

The dialectic which Luther failed to grasp was that of faith and good works, or faith in its relation to a way of life. Kierkegaard does not minimize the demands of God's law, before which Luther had to acknowledge himself as powerless; the Dane emphasizes that the infinite, the absolute requirements of the law "mock absolutely every human striving."⁵⁵ As Johannes Sløk has pointed out, Kierkegaard felt that his situation required a far more vigorous proclamation of the law—in its infinite demands—than the Danish Church of his day allowed.⁵⁶ Nor does he minimize the grace of the gospel. He writes, "Christianity requires everything of you, but when you have accomplished everything it requires, all the same, that you realize you have been saved by grace alone and nothing else."⁵⁷ But Kierkegaard's struggle was not, like Luther's, the agony of an accusing conscience before the exacting demands of God's righteousness, before a moral perfection in which man finds himself undone. Luther saw the whole theme of the Christian life in the statement that whom God humiliates he also raises up. Kierkegaard objects that the way in which Luther describes law and gospel does not conform to Christ's teaching.⁵⁸ Luther makes of the law something rigorous and vexing, while the gospel, correspondingly, is all mildness and jubilation. By resolving the tensions of life he transforms Christianity into Judaism. Judaism leaves one in comfort and security; Christianity is demanding and tormenting. Luther should not have slackened Christian demands as he did; he should have raised them higher.⁵⁹ Kierkegaard does express sympathy for the poor people who must muster all their resources simply to make a living: It would be cruelty to drive the price of salvation up for them; let them have the good tidings of consolation and redemption. But in the salons the price should have been driven up higher.⁶⁰

Clearly we are not far here from the heart of Kierkegaard's criticism of Luther. For Kierkegaard the real tension is not between condemnation and mercy, demand and gift, sinner and saint. He refuses to accord Luther, even with Luther's recognition that faith is a most perturbing thing,⁶¹ the distinction of being a true dialectician. For Kierkegaard grace must always find its counterpart—and fulfillment—in effort. But this effort is never distinct from or independent of grace: the limitations of effort drive one to grace, but grace, in turn, drives one to renewed and intensified effort. Ethical life, as a life of striving and endeavor, is suspended with the intrusion of divine grace. But, as Dupré has pointed out:

“. . . once the process of grace has been initiated, the ethical demands become stricter than they ever were before. Grace frees man only from the worry of saving himself by his own effort: his salvation no longer depends on this effort, but on God’s mercy alone. The strain of the effort is removed—but not the effort itself.”⁶²

Good works are, however, effected only through grace. The effort at gratitude is itself grace, for to the infinite humiliation and exaltation which Luther recognized Kierkegaard must add a third stage, the effort at thankfulness.⁶³ He can only distrust the spontaneity and freedom Luther identified with the life of faith. The deep intrusion on Luther’s consciousness of the dialectic of condemnation-grace had its counterpart in Kierkegaard in the dialectic of faith-imitation. The “fig leaf” of Luther’s faith had to be torn away.⁶⁴

We should now look more directly at the pole of this formulation that is distinctively the corrective, the *imitatio Christi*. Kierkegaard regarded the Middle Ages as having gone astray in emphasizing Christ as the model for the Christian to follow. To be sure, the key conception of Christianity, as directed toward the transformation of personal existence, was present in that era. But the *imitatio* tended to be directed toward singular features of Christ’s life, e.g., fasting, “monkeyshines,” flagellations, the care of the poor. This first error was complemented by a second: merit was piled upon merit until good works became a profitable commodity.⁶⁵ Luther, then, had rightly stressed Christ as a gift received by faith.⁶⁶ However, though it would seem that Kierkegaard approved of Luther at this point—since he did not challenge the idea of Christianity as grace or gift—he actually felt that Luther had streamlined and reduced the requirements of the religious life. Luther’s version of Christian faith could only lead to spiritual complacency and trickery. Kierkegaard’s day required the elevation and recapitulation of Christ the pattern:

“Imitation,” “the following of Christ,” this precisely is the point where the human race winces, here it is principally that the difficulty lies, here is where the question really is decided whether one will accept Christianity or not. . . . If it is done away with entirely (so that Christianity becomes, existentially, as easy as mythology and poetry, while imitation is exaggeration, a ludicrous exaggeration), then Christianity widens out to such a degree that Christendom and the world almost correspond, or all become Christians, then Christianity has triumphed completely—in other words, it is done away with.⁶⁷

Acceptance of Christianity thus means for Kierkegaard not the

appropriation by the intellect of a doctrine of Christ as Atoner for sin; the acumen of indifferent parson or speculative professor falls short of *experiencing* the work of Christ the Atoner. Kierkegaard's treatment of the *imitatio* must be seen in relation to his view of the impossibility of direct communication where faith is concerned. Faith, understood as "subjective truth," is directed toward the transformation of the entire shape and quality of one's being. It is, in the words of the pseudonymous Johannes Climacus, "to transform the entire existence of the individual."⁶⁸ Here, too, his view of "reduplication," the transformation of the communicator's life and mode of living, becomes important. One cannot prattle about the dogma of the incarnation as the parsons do without making a travesty of Christ and Christianity.⁶⁹

In the emphasis on inner appropriation of the benefits of Christ's work, Kierkegaard was quite right in detecting common ground with Luther. But the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae* is the doctrine of suffering: what is of primary importance is that the individual Christian should pattern his life upon the Christian model, the suffering and persecuted Jesus. Thus, although Kierkegaard disclaimed any role other than that of "corrective," yet his was a call for *reformatio*, a return to an original form: the pattern must once again be brought into the foreground of Christianity. Jesus is not proclaimer of, or a lecturer on, a doctrine, but essentially the pattern. To the pattern corresponds imitation, a following of Him, humble and persevering discipleship. The way of being a Christian is not one of worshiping an exalted Christ or admiring a heroic benefactor but of following, i.e., striving to *be* what one admires.⁷⁰ Admiration, indeed, has its place; but it is an admiration—raised with respect to the God-man to the level of worship—which always finds expression in imitation. One is led through worship to want to become like the pattern.⁷¹ For the admirer is related to Christ only via the imagination, the way in which one relates himself to an actor on stage.⁷² Something more fundamental is required, says Kierkegaard:

. . . the admirer is not willing to make any sacrifices, to give up anything worldly, to reconstruct his life, to be what he admires or let his life express it—but in words, verbal expressions, asseverations, he is inexhaustible in affirming how highly he prizes Christianity. The follower, on the other hand, aspires to be what he admires . . .⁷³

Kierkegaard was not well enough acquainted with Luther's writings to be able to recognize the reformer's fondness for Christ as *exemplar* of the Christian life. As indicated earlier, he saw Luther as

very properly emphasizing grace and faith, and as living out what he taught:

But let us not forget that for all this Luther did not do away with the following of Christ, nor with the voluntary imitation, as the effeminate coterie is so fain to make us believe. He applied imitation in connexion with witnessing for truth, and (without imagining, however, that it was meritorious) in this respect he voluntarily exposed himself to dangers enough. In fact, it was not the Pope who attacked Luther, but Luther who attacked the Pope; and Luther's life, although he was not put to death, was nevertheless a sacrificed life, a life sacrificed to witnessing for truth.⁷⁴

Yet Luther's understanding of Christ as *Urbild*, the representation or depiction of all that happens to the Christian under God, embodied features quite foreign to Kierkegaard's presentation of the *Vorbild*, the pattern. For Luther the dogmatic tradition regarding the person and work of Christ operated more constructively than Kierkegaard's concern for contemporaneity with Christ would allow. Again, after the acknowledgement of the dogma, Luther held that the identification with Christ must be actualized. Kierkegaard could have little sympathy for Luther's conception of Christ the Savior as being *in* the believer, making it possible for the individual to have what Christ has, guiding him to renewal. Though in both Luther and Kierkegaard Christ is the picture of what happens to the believer, still the process is seen along radically different lines. Luther's is a mystical identification based on the believer's being cemented together with Christ through faith. The *imitatio Christi* is the clothing with Christ's righteousness, power, and life. For Luther, the "putting on of Christ" need not entail suffering the same things Christ suffered.⁷⁵ Kierkegaard's is a constant, passionate striving to imitate the pattern.⁷⁶ Each individual spirit relives the cruciform character of the Messiah's life.

Moreover, while for Luther the significance of Christ the *exemplar* is that as Christ was humiliated in order to be raised up so must the Christian be made humble in order to be raised up, in Kierkegaard one misses the risen life—either in Christ or in the Christian. The imitation is of the historical Jesus—persecuted, suffering, rejected by a faithless world—but not of the Jesus who overcame sin, death, and Satan on the cross and demonstrated his victory in the resurrection. Kierkegaard emphasizes that "it is the humiliated Christ that speaks, that every word we have from Christ is from him in his humiliation."⁷⁷ The resurrected life would substitute for the ever-militant life of Christ's church the deception of a church already

triumphant.⁷⁸ Or it would introduce into the tortuous task of living in conformity with the pattern the idea of profiting apishly in his triumph.⁷⁹

It may be well to see Kierkegaard's distinctive *imitatio Christi* in its relationship to the *substitutio Christi*. No one may put himself entirely in Jesus' place, because Jesus was incomparably the greatest sufferer of all. He suffered as representative man, because he stepped into the sinner's place:

For what else is the Atoner than a substitute (*Stedfortraeder*) who entirely puts Himself in thy place? And what is the comfort of it but this, that the Substitute puts Himself entirely in my place and thine? So when retributive justice, either here on earth or hereafter at the Day of Judgement, seeks the place where I a sinner stand with all my guilt—it does not find me, I no longer stand in that place, I have left it, Another stands in my place, Another who entirely puts Himself in my place. For this I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ.⁸⁰

Dupré follows Chestov in discerning in this passage an echo of Luther's description of the Father's address to his Son: "Be thou Peter the betrayer, Paul the persecutor, the blasphemer, and the man of violence, David the adulterer, the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise, the murderer on the Cross, be Thou the Person Who hath committed all the sins in the world."⁸¹

There are remarkable and unmistakable affinities between the two descriptions, and one might cite other parallels of thought and expression. But one should not overlook the fact that Kierkegaard's substitutionary atonement is set in a framework of the sinner's conformity to the suffering of Christ. The possibility for the sinner of facing trials, temptations, and deprivations is rooted in the sharing of these same vicissitudes by the Atoner. Kierkegaard ties Redeemer to Pattern in an intimate interaction which allows for both divine grace and human striving: he expresses his striving in a prayer opening his discourse on "Christ the Pattern":

Help us all and everyone, Thou who are both willing and able to help, Thou who art both the Pattern and the Redeemer, and again both the Redeemer and the Pattern, so that when the striver sinks under the Pattern, then the Redeemer raises him up again, but at the same instant Thou art the Pattern, to keep him continually striving. Thou, our Redeemer, by Thy blessed suffering and death, hast made satisfaction for all and for everything; no eternal blessedness can be or shall be earned by desert—it has been deserved. Yet Thou didst leave behind Thee the trace of Thy footsteps, Thou the holy pattern of the human race and of each individual in it, so that, saved by Thy redemption, they might every instant have confidence and boldness to will to strive to follow Thee.⁸²

This imitation or following which Kierkegaard identifies with true Christianity, must, however, be seen as "sheer suffering, groaning and lamentation, heightened by a background of judgment in which every word must be accounted for, then it is a terrible series of suffering, *Angst*, and trembling."⁸³ This is what the Christianity of the Gospels essentially is; this is also the Christianity which was so quickly lost. Even the Pauline version—so dear to Luther—with its emphasis on faith and grace alone tends to make of Christian faith an insipid optimism. For Luther explains suffering and tribulation as coming from the devil; adversity becomes accidental or incidental. The *essential* New Testament relationship between suffering and becoming a Christian is lost. Suffering does not come from the devil, as Luther thought, but from God. It stems from the infinite qualitative difference between God and man: the clash between time and eternity in time produces suffering.⁸⁴ Or this can be seen as arising when man, living in a conditioned world, is nevertheless called to the service of the Absolute.⁸⁵ If one were to live merely for the temporal and in the temporal he could be free from this fearful tension. The monastery, too, which Luther left, represents a compromise with the relative and the temporal. But the most intense suffering is the highest blessedness. In *The Gospel of Suffering* Kierkegaard contrasts man's self-sufficiency with God's infinite majesty and calls for the believer to train for eternity by learning in the school of Christ's suffering.⁸⁶

Luther's concept of suffering did not hinge on the resolute rejection of the world and its millions—the keynote, for Kierkegaard, of authentic Christianity. Although Luther considered the Christian a *rara avis*, part of a small remnant, the essential hostility to the world was conspicuously lacking. Most conclusive, however, is the fact that he failed to achieve the grace of martyrdom for the truth.⁸⁷ He did not offer his life as a sacrifice before hostile powers: it was by changing the concept of the martyr that Luther altered Christianity.⁸⁸ In his own tormented conscience he suffered unspeakably; but he retreated from this authentic stance, this exposed position *vis-à-vis* torment. Again we see Kierkegaard's central critique of Luther, his failure to think dialectically. Although Luther, as Kierkegaard himself learned, was aware that the cross involved the recognition that Christ sends the purified out to suffering and persecution, he nevertheless reached the point where he had to break with the Apostle James. The situation in Kierkegaard's day required, however, that discipleship be elevated as the dialectical element in

faith.⁸⁹ Otherwise faith would not be seen in its proper relationship to striving.⁹⁰

To be a Christian in the New Testament sense is to renounce the world, to make the infinite resignation of the knight of faith, to be crucified by the enemies of Christ. Christianity is and remains something foreign to Luther. He failed to see this character of unrest and martyrdom:

In the New Testament being a Christian is expressed by the apostles: it is like spirit, spirit's utmost unrest, the impatience of eternity, sheer fear and trembling, all heightened by being in this evil world, which crucified love, heightened again by fear of the last reckoning, when the Lord and Master will come again and judge whether they have been faithful.

If this is so, then having to be a martyr, which Christ prophesied for Christians, far from being an aggravation is rather an alleviation. For one could say that only such external sufferings, and at the end a martyr's death, are able to alleviate and assuage the torments of soul which accompany the effort to be a Christian in the New Testament sense.⁹¹

Increasingly Kierkegaard saw this pattern of unrest and alleviation taking shape in his own life. The massive abuse heaped upon him by the mob was nothing less than a slow death, a case of being trampled to death by geese, but it served to alleviate the inner sorrow of spirit, his unique thorn in the flesh.⁹² Never for a moment did he relax the thread of effort attendant upon being a Christian. Luther had introduced a Copernican revolution into Christianity,⁹³ but he did this by setting Christianity on its head: it was set on the soft, motionless head of tranquillity rather than on the restless feet of effort. Kierkegaard's corrective may be seen as a turning, a setting of Protestantism on the solid feet of endeavor once again.

The gospel of suffering is closely related to another theme in the critique: Luther's enthronement of worldliness as the true "Protestant" religion. Kierkegaard's denunciations of a time-serving Christendom are too well known to be rehearsed here. Luther had set in motion the participation of the church in the world by his own practical adaptations to the cultural situation. The prophetic quality of Luther's own faith had been compromised by thousands of mediations with society's demands. According to Kierkegaard's understanding Luther had compromised on two crucial points: he had taken a more positive view of the world than the Christian ethic justified, and he had sanctioned a view of the church which justified the incorporation of the world into the organized church. In Luther's

view of faith, after one has been called out of the world by the *punctum mathematicum* of faith he is sent back into the structures of the world to fulfill his Christian calling, his *Beruf*. It is in the ambiguities of one's secular calling, where God assigns one his particular post and task, that he lives out his profession. And it is within the *Schöpfungsordnungen*—curious and mistaken conceptions to Kierkegaard—that faith and love and hope are called to act. But through these structures, and quite apart from the work of Christians, God pursues his purpose of establishing his kingdom of grace. He establishes it through the institution of marriage, even the bourgeois marriage of the nineteenth century which Kierkegaard renounced in his symbolic rejection of Regina. Luther's Katharina was no ironing board. His marriage was indeed a symbolic act, but it was also a bond with the world and an essential relation to a definite person.⁹⁴ Luther took Katharina too seriously. Kierkegaard could accept her as symbol, as an ironing board, but Luther—or anyone who wishes to become a solitary individual, “alone” before the transcendent God—should not have entered such an essential relation with anyone but God. Kierkegaard renounced Regina because he must reach God through the “narrow pass.”⁹⁵ Certainly the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries required different acts, but in Kierkegaard's view Luther's marriage expressed a false bond with the world.

Luther's understanding of the church was also distorted. The church is a minute remnant, “a small and despised flock” as Luther himself saw it.⁹⁶ Yet he paved the way for the “crowd,” the uncommitted charlatans. The church is a *spiritual* phenomenon; Luther tied it to cultural institutions. The church is a *pure* church; Luther saw this as existing only by faith. In his Preface to the *Deutsche Messe* Luther seriously grappled with the distinction between those who “want to be Christians in earnest” and a *Volkskirche* arrangement involving “all the people, among whom are many who do not believe and are not yet Christians.”⁹⁷ Luther was wary of the unstable masses, of “Messrs. Omnes,” but he saw no practical possibility of sifting out the “pure wheat,” nor does he elaborate a theology for the “gathered church,” though he can see certain distinct advantages in such an arrangement.

PATIENT AND DOCTOR OF CHRISTIANITY

It is not our responsibility to explore further what Luther willed and what the historical development produced—including the sterile

and stultifying Lutheranism of Kierkegaard's Denmark. According to Kierkegaard's own categories, Luther failed to offer the solution for Christianity's debility. He was a sensitive, suffering, articulate patient. He even diagnosed the malady quite well. But when it came to prescribing treatment he administered a sedative. Kierkegaard has no doubt but that the treatment was benevolent in Luther's own anxious condition, yet when as doctor of the church he prescribed such sedation for millions he drugged them into the state of spiritless torpor that marked Christendom in Kierkegaard's day. This was the doctor's marvelous cure: it was marvelous, but the patient died.

Kierkegaard has a penchant for the "patient-physician" figure. Luther, finally, lacked the "overall view" that would have enabled him to prescribe, at the right time and in just the proper amount, the propitious treatment for his patient. Christendom in Kierkegaard's day suffered from vastly aggravated disorders.⁹⁸ Kierkegaard did not see himself as its physician; he was its most distinguished patient, with a thorn in the flesh, bearing a cross, being ground to dust in the most bitter pain.⁹⁹ When on occasion he overstepped the modest role of prescribing for his personal melancholy and directed everyone to his solution, he, too, fell into untruth.

So we have two "Lutheran" patients of Christianity. Which of the two suffered most acutely is a matter for God and not for us to determine. But such essential suffering is also, when understood dialectically, also a healing.¹⁰⁰ For both men their suffering became, by a secret, divine alembic, a healing for their own lives and for the church. On such grounds both Luther and Kierkegaard are patients and doctors of Christianity.

N O T E S

¹ Kierkegaard's *Dialectic of Existence*, trans. Harold Knight (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 159.

² Cf. Louis Dupré, *Kierkegaard as Theologian* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 164.

³ "Wie urteilte Kierkegaard über Luther?" *Luther Jahrbuch*, X (1928), pp. 2-3.

⁴ Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 53. Cf. also Geismar, *op. cit.* p. 18.

⁵ *The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard* (hereafter *Journals*), ed. and trans. Alexander Dru (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), no. 1298.

⁶ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Last Years: Journals 1853-1855*, ed. and trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Harper, 1965), pp. 320 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁸ *Ibid.*⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93; cf. also p. 83.¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 50.¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.¹² *Journals*, no. 889.¹³ *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer* (hereafter *Papirer*), ed. P. A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr, and E. Torsting (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1909-38). X² A 208.¹⁴ *The Diary of Søren Kierkegaard* (hereafter *Diary*), trans. Gerda M. Anderson, ed. Peter P. Rohde (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), p. 169.¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 169.¹⁶ *Journals*, no. 540.¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 1025.¹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 540.¹⁹ *The Last Years*, pp. 319-20, 323.²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 319.²¹ *The Concept of Dread*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 139 ff.²² *The Last Years*, pp. 319-20.²³ *Ibid.*, p. 323.²⁴ *Journals*, no. 899.²⁵ *Ibid.*²⁶ *Diary*, p. 168.²⁷ *The Last Years*, p. 318.²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 324.²⁹ *Diary*, p. 170.³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 168.³¹ *For Self-Examination*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 40-41.³² *Journals*, no. 1298.³³ *Ibid.*³⁴ *The Last Years*, pp. 320 ff.³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 322.³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93.³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 50.³⁸ *Diary*, p. 168.³⁹ *Diary*, p. 169.⁴⁰ *Journals*, no. 540.⁴¹ *The Last Years*, p. 319.⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 319-20.⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 320.⁴⁴ Cf. *Papirer*, X A 651; X¹ A 213.⁴⁵ *Journals*, no. 899.⁴⁶ *For Self-Examination*, p. 49.⁴⁷ *The Last Years*, p. 324.⁴⁸ *Journals*, no. 1317.⁴⁹ *Diary*, p. 170.⁵⁰ *Journals*, no. 889.⁵¹ *Ibid.*, no. 1304.⁵² Dupré, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-13.⁵³ *The Last Years*, p. 83.⁵⁴ *Papirer*, X⁴ A 459.⁵⁵ *Judge for Yourself*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 165.

⁵⁶ Joh. Sløk, "Kierkegaard and Luther," *A Kierkegaard Critique*, ed. Howard A. Johnson and Niels Thulstrup (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), p. 100.

⁵⁷ X³ A 353.

⁵⁸ XI¹ A 572.

⁵⁹ XI¹ A 134; cf. *The Last Years*, p. 66.

⁶⁰ X¹ A 135.

⁶¹ *For Self-Examination*, p. 42.

⁶² Dupré, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁶³ *Judge for Yourself*, pp. 165-66.

⁶⁴ *Journals*, no. 889.

⁶⁵ *Judge for Yourself*, p. 201.

⁶⁶ *Journals*, *ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Judge for Yourself*, p. 197.

⁶⁸ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. D. F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 347.

⁶⁹ *Training in Christianity*, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 133-34.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 242-43.

⁷¹ X¹ A 134; cf. *Journals*, no. 887.

⁷² *Training in Christianity*, p. 237.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁷⁴ *Judge for Yourself*, p. 202.

⁷⁵ WA 40-I, 539.

⁷⁶ X² A 239.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Training in Christianity*, p. 231; cf. also *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. D. F. Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), p. 91.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁸⁰ *Christian Discourses*, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 369.

⁸¹ Dupré, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

⁸² *Judge for Yourself*, p. 161.

⁸³ *The Last Years*, p. 50.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁸⁶ Trans. D. F. and L. M. Swenson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1948), p. 47 ff.

⁸⁷ *Journals*, no. 1304.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁸⁹ X² A 361.

⁹⁰ X³ A 322. Cf. Geismar, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-2.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁹³ Cf. *Journals*, no. 234.

⁹⁴ Cf. Buber, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁹⁶ *Journals*, no. 1234.

⁹⁷ *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), Vol. 53, pp. 63-64.

⁹⁸ *Journals*, no. 1317.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 600.

¹⁰⁰ X² A 163.

ADOLF VON HARNACK ON LUTHER

JAROSLAV PELIKAN

IN HIS inaugural lecture of 1953 as professor at Union Theological Seminary, Wilhelm Pauck made explicit the conviction that had been implicit in his scholarship and teaching for a long time, that "the importance of Harnack's work and outlook will be more fully recognized in the coming years than it is now."¹ And a few years later he stated this conviction even more vigorously: "The churches have more need of a Harnack than of a Barth."² Yet in writing on Luther, Professor Pauck has set forth an "interpretation of Luther's theology . . . [that] depends largely upon Holl's work"³ rather than on Adolf von Harnack's, and it is Karl Holl whom he acclaims as "one of the most thorough of Luther's modern interpreters."⁴ In this judgment he is joined by Harnack himself, who declared, in his memorial address of June 12, 1926, for Holl, that "from the book on Luther, his greatest accomplishment, scholarship and the Protestant church correctly date a new stage in the understanding of the Reformer."⁵

The period during which Karl Holl and others developed this new understanding of Luther may, for the sake of convenience, be said to open in 1883, when the first volume of the Weimar edition was published, and to climax in 1917, with Holl's essay on "Luther's Understanding of Religion," delivered on the occasion of the quadricentennial of the posting of the ninety-five theses.⁶ These same years were also the prime of Harnack's life as a man and as a scholar. He began work on his *Dogmengeschichte* in June 1884, and he dated the preface to the last edition of the last volume in December 1909. Not only did Harnack find many of the results of the intervening research on Luther uncongenial in their theological implications, as we shall see; but he objected to that research also on basic grounds of method, as he stated early in his career: "The fact that we do not progress in theology as we ought is in great measure because many church historians one-sidedly cultivate the history of the Reformation or the Middle Ages and in ancient church history express only a certain second-rate common sense."⁷ This did not, to be sure, apply at all to Holl, whose most solid scholarly achievements were in the

ancient field and included the first critical edition of Epiphanius;⁸ as Harnack put it, "to him as a scholar ancient church history was and remained the principal field, but to him as a teacher it was Reformation history, with which his seminar also dealt almost exclusively."⁹ But as Martin Grabmann complained about a Thomism that did not know the writings of the church fathers,¹⁰ so a Luther research uninformed by primary study of patristic sources—and this means much of the Luther research of both Germany and Scandinavia—seemed to Harnack to leave many of the chief questions unanswered, indeed unasked. Thus in the sense in which the term came to be used, one would probably not call Adolf von Harnack a Luther scholar.

Yet many a Luther scholar, then and now, would be proud if his own publications on Luther could match those of Harnack, either qualitatively or quantitatively. In 1883 he delivered a festival address on "Martin Luther in his Significance for the History of Scholarship and Culture," which went through six editions and was also translated into Swedish.¹¹ The year 1896, which saw the appearance in English of at least two other works, was also the date of his brief essay on "Martin Luther, the Prophet of the Reformation," which seems to have been composed especially for publication in English.¹² Probably the most widely read of Harnack's works on Luther was his little book of 1917, commissioned by the city of Berlin during World War I and distributed in many thousands of copies.¹³ Also in 1917 he published a long essay on "The Reformation and Its Presupposition," which dealt extensively with the fifteenth-century backgrounds of Luther.¹⁴ Near the end of his life Harnack delivered a lecture at the University of Münster, which was published in 1926 under the title, "The Significance of Luther's Reformation in the History of Religion."¹⁵ In addition to these individual essays, the 100-page monograph on Luther with which the *Dogmengeschichte* concludes could, like its counterpart on Augustine, appear as a book unto itself, summarizing as it does in brilliant strokes the importance of Luther both in his relation to the dogmatic tradition and in the problems which he bequeathed to posterity.¹⁶ Unfortunately, this monograph has been poorly served by an English translation which, by an egregious misreading of Luther's German, represents him as contending against the Jesuits a decade or more before the founding of the Society of Jesus.¹⁷

Nor is even this impressive body of writing about Luther an accurate measure of his importance in Harnack's thought. As Professor Pauck has suggested, the two dominant theological influences on

Harnack were Paul and Luther;¹⁸ and Harnack himself could speak, while delivering his lectures on *Das Wesen des Christentums*, of what he had "learned from Paul, Luther, and Ritschl," adding: "And I think that they received it from Someone greater."¹⁹ Despite its prominence in Harnack's theology, his *Lutherbild* has not been accorded the scholarly attention it deserves. Perhaps the fairest study of it is that of M. C. Slotemaker de Bruine,²⁰ but this is little more than a brief summary of the main points in Harnack's interpretation. During Harnack's own lifetime at least two major critiques of his interpretation of Luther were published. One was issued in 1891 by Robert Kübel, who concluded that "the core of the Lutheran view of faith or the actual Christianity of Luther as it is expressed in the years 1519 to 1523, is not that which Harnack presents as such";²¹ this evoked Harnack's response in later editions of the *Dogmengeschichte*.²² The other was written in 1904 by the Dominican medievalist, Heinrich Denifle, responding to Harnack's review of Volume I of his book *Luther und Luthertum* and accusing Harnack of "distortions that have been taken over from Luther, inveterate prejudices, total ignorance or twisted interpretation of Catholic doctrine";²³ Harnack took the occasion of the posthumous publication of Volume II of Denifle's work by Albert Maria Weiss, O.P., to reply at great length.²⁴ Although these critiques do score some decisive debating points, they do not come to terms with the full range of Harnack's picture of Luther.

That range is itself both a great problem and an indispensable resource for the study of Harnack's *Lutherbild*. Hans Freiherr von Soden, son of an old family friend and himself a grateful but not uncritical pupil of Harnack's, summarized his teacher's career as follows: "It is characteristic of Harnack's personality and lifework that he combined a strict concentration on the original and central point of his scholarly labor, the history of the early catholic church, with a universality of interest that embraces all scholarly life not only that of the humanities, and all social life not only that of the church."²⁵ Inevitably, such universality was accused by lesser minds of being *leichtsinnig*,²⁶ and those who made a virtue of obscurity took Harnack's lucid prose as evidence of shallowness. He did not, for that matter, lack for critics on more substantive grounds as well.²⁷ But if von Soden's characterization of this universality is sound and if Pauck's identification of Luther as Harnack's mentor is accurate, some connection to Luther ought to be visible in most, if not all, of the *personae* of Harnack's career as a scholar and thinker. This essay

will review some of those *personae*, concentrating first on his "inheritance" and then on his "vocation."²⁸

HARNACK'S INHERITANCE AND LUTHER

A preoccupation with Luther was unavoidable for the son of Theodosius Harnack. Over and above his significant contribution to ecclesiology,²⁹ the insights of the elder Harnack into Luther's doctrines of God and of sin, as Otto Wolff has shown,³⁰ earn him an honored place in any history of the interpretation of Luther; indeed, Heinrich Bornkamm has called *Luthers Theologie* by Theodosius Harnack "the most significant, in fact, strictly speaking the only significant theological book on Luther in the nineteenth century," even though its impact upon its own time was remarkably small.³¹ In spite of the religious and personal alienation that developed between him and his father, Adolf Harnack could not avoid being the heir of this Lutheran traditionalism, also in his view of Luther. As late as 1909, he could let stand in his *Dogmengeschichte* the recommendation of his father's book, "which has not been surpassed for objectivity and for its ability to appreciate the 'whole' Luther."³² It should perhaps be added that Harnack *père* also transcended the alienation to declare about Adolf's lecture of 1883: "Among the many lectures on Luther I regard yours, both as to arrangement and as to most of its exposition, as the best; and I believe that I am being nonpartisan in my judgment."³³

Although Adolf Harnack's relation to the confessional tradition represented by his father is usually and accurately interpreted as a rejection, his debt to it continued to be great. Not only did he, like so many other theologians who grew up as sons of the Protestant manse, owe his early acquaintance with the vocabulary and issues of theology to the atmosphere of his parental home; but specifically in his understanding of Luther one can discern traces of the *Neulutherum* in which he was reared. This is evident, above all, in his emphasis upon Luther's conservatism. "Luther did not change anything in the fundamental presupposition of the ancient and medieval church" was his judgment in the essay of 1926.³⁴ His first publication on Luther, that of 1883, had stressed the discontinuity of the Reformation with its past, "not only the break with the church of the Middle Ages, but in fact also the debate with the church of antiquity, with the catholicism which had been built out of the remnants of classical antiquity."³⁵ Between this judgment of 1883 and that of 1926 lay

much of Harnack's research into the dogmatic and constitutional development of that "church of antiquity," as well as a closer examination of how Luther had regarded that development. And therefore "the same man who liberated the gospel of Jesus Christ from ecclesiasticism and from moralism strengthened its validity in the forms of old-catholic theology. . . . There was no theologian since Athanasius who had made the doctrine of the deity of Christ as vital for faith as Luther; no teacher since Cyril had arisen in the church for whom the mystery of the unity of the two natures in Christ was such a consolation as it was for Luther . . . ; no mystagogue of antiquity spoke of the holy food in the eucharist with greater conviction."³⁶ Harnack's catalogue of "catholic elements" which Luther had retained alongside his new understanding of the gospel holds the key to much of the development of Protestantism after the Reformation as well as to its development since Harnack;³⁷ for some theologians have sought to purge out those remaining elements of dogma while others have sought to recover their catholic substance. Vigorous and radical as Harnack's convictions about reforming the Reformation were,³⁸ extending even to the point of putting the rest of the Old Testament on the same level as Luther had put the Apocrypha,³⁹ he was too much the historian to ignore the paradox that Luther the Reformer had retained and even strengthened the dogmatic theology which he in turn had inherited from ancient and medieval Christianity; and in the historical recognition of this paradox Harnack was uniting himself with his father and his father's colleagues, much as he diverged from them in the theological conclusions drawn from this recognition.

Therefore "nothing is more incorrect than the widely held notion that the dissolution of dogmatic Christianity by Luther is tantamount to a neutralization of the *fides quae creditur* as such, so that only pious feelings matter. A more foolish misunderstanding of the Reformation is inconceivable."⁴⁰ This was, in a sense, a misunderstanding to which Harnack's own work had led some of his disciples; here, as elsewhere, he had to admit that he "was not without a share in the emergence of movements with which I cannot identify myself now."⁴¹ But Harnack's relation to Luther's conservatism is even more complex. For he not only attributed to that conservatism the dogmatic and cultic sterility of the churches, but he also recognized that in other ways Luther's Reformation had been entirely too radical, rejecting or at least failing to keep features of the tradition—for example, the entire idea of sacrifice⁴²—that deserved to be treated

with more positive respect. One such feature about whose earlier history Harnack was extremely well informed was monasticism.⁴³ Harnack recognized the features which had evoked Luther's denunciation of monasticism as the identification of Christian perfection with the life of an elite removed from social responsibility. But Harnack also acknowledged that the Reformation paid too high a price when it deprived its heirs of the benefits of monasticism.⁴⁴ As Ernst Benz has pointed out, "it is specifically Harnack as a Protestant who declares that monasticism is not only conceivable, but also necessary, in evangelical terms."⁴⁵ This acknowledgement is part of Harnack's deep and genuine admiration for Roman Catholicism, which he expressed not only in his well-known essay of 1891 and in the fourteenth lecture of *Das Wesen des Christentums*, but also in an eloquent tribute at the conclusion of the *Dogmengeschichte*:

The right of the Catholic Church to existence cannot very well be controverted. Whoever takes people as they are and as they will remain for many generations to come, cannot cast doubt on the justification for this world-embracing institution. Over and over, this church begets saints, and at the same time it teaches its other children "to hurl their spears and to honor the gods," that is, to take religion as it has always been taken by the masses and as the masses demand it. What more does one want? As long as it remains impossible to achieve the virtues necessary for the common life and to discipline the lower urges by equations or out of the test tube (and for the moment this does not seem to be succeeding), one will have to admit the necessity and the positive value of an institution which disciplines the common man and yet also gives delicate consciences what they want, and is in a position to evoke their faith in it as a supernatural creation.⁴⁶

From any professed disciple of Martin Luther, this would be an amazing affirmation. From one whose lifelong program it was to continue the Reformation by applying to dogma the same criticism which Luther had applied to the ecclesiastical institution, this is a testimony to the historical fairness which, even amid a radical attack upon traditional orthodoxy, reasserted for a new generation the sort of pastoral and pedagogical conservatism that had, for quite divergent reasons, been so close to Luther and to his epigones in the nineteenth century.

Of course, this tribute to Roman Catholicism must not be taken as proof that Harnack did not mean his critique of Luther's cultic and dogmatic conservatism seriously. He was, after all, in Paul Tillich's phrase, "the greatest figure in the Ritschian school."⁴⁷ In 1922 Harnack stated that Ritschl "claimed that he was following Luther. His

opponents contested this claim. . . . But on the main issue Ritschl was right in his assertion.⁴⁸ Among the "opponents" who contested Ritschl's claim to be following Luther, none was more prominent or more vehement in his polemics than Theodosius Harnack. More than twenty years separated the second volume of his book on the theology of Luther from the first. The foreword to Volume II, dated November 10, 1885 (Luther's birthday), is a long attack on the basic thesis of Ritschl's study of Luther's doctrine of reconciliation and related issues.⁴⁹ So vehement was this polemic that Adolf Harnack felt obliged to write Ritschl a letter of apology and of assurance of his own personal devotion. Ritschl wrote back, generously, that he had not finished reading the book, both because he knew that his relation to Adolf would preclude the possibility of a reply and because he did not intend to alter his respect for Theodosius. And he closed with a quotation from *Ein' feste Burg*: "The kingdom ours remaineth."⁵⁰

The two principal historical problems with which Ritschl's scholarship dealt were no less central to Adolf Harnack's research: the rise of the old-catholic church and the relation between Luther and Lutheranism.⁵¹ The former was the major theme of Harnack's career as an historical theologian.⁵² When Volume I of the *Dogmen-geschichte* appeared in December 1885, it was to Ritschl that Harnack sent the first copy of a book which, he said in his accompanying letter, "would probably never have been written had it not been for the foundation which you have laid."⁵³ But on the latter of the two problems, the relation between Luther and Lutheranism, Harnack's debt to Ritschl was far greater. Even where he does not mention Ritschl by name, the debt is visible. Here was where Ritschl's own studies had dug more deeply than had Harnack's, while in the history of the early church the pupil left the teacher behind. But in both problems both scholars took as their theme the discontinuity between the original impulse and the developing institution.

For Harnack's insight into that discontinuity as it appears between Luther and Lutheranism, Ritschl's treatise on the rise of the Lutheran church was *grundlegend*.⁵⁴ It was Ritschl and his pupils who, in Professor Pauck's phrase, "reversed the long-established order and interpreted the creeds and confessions of the Reformation in the light of the teaching of the Reformers, instead of adapting the dynamic faith of the Reformation to the doctrines of the creeds."⁵⁵ Thus Ritschl's famous attack on the distinction between the formal and the material principle of the Reformation reinforced Harnack in

his conclusion that for Luther "the content was the authority and the authority the content."⁵⁶ It was Ritschl's great achievement—"one may say, for the first time"—to have pointed out the significance of the Reformation as a fundamental reconception of the ideal of religious and moral perfection, more fundamental and radical than any since the apostolic age.⁵⁷ Similarly, Ritschl had managed to put the sectarianism of the radical Reformation into its proper historical context, in contrast to the "confessionalist historiography" of men like Theodosius Harnack, which "did not properly grasp the significance of the Reformation" and so "had little understanding and little sympathy for the 'sects' of the Reformation period."⁵⁸ Ritschl's investigations of the backgrounds of Lutheran Pietism had illuminated for Harnack the relation between dogmatism and devotion in Lutheran orthodoxy.⁵⁹ The history of that relation during earlier centuries, particularly as it was expressed in medieval mysticism, had also been explored by the pioneering work of Ritschl, and Harnack took over his master's insights.⁶⁰

This he did gratefully, but by no means uncritically. Even on the contrast between Luther and Melanchthon, Ritschl had, in Harnack's judgment, exaggerated the tensions.⁶¹ The rediscovery of the sectarians of the Reformation, for which Ritschl had pointed the way, still left much to be desired in its historical insight.⁶² Richard Adelbert Lipsius, one of Ritschl's most sharp-sighted critics,⁶³ had, in the last book he wrote before he died, examined Luther's doctrine of penance.⁶⁴ Although Harnack did not accept all of Lipsius' conclusions, he was compelled to admit that "following Ritschl, I did not do justice to Luther's doctrine of the law in relation to penance."⁶⁵ Ritschl's studies of the Reformation had been hampered by an undue preoccupation with *Christian* history at the expense of the history of religion, where Luther's work deserved to be placed.⁶⁶ Perhaps the most sharp-sighted of Harnack's own criticisms of Ritschl's work on the Reformation came in connection with his praise of the new picture of Anabaptism, for which Ritschl's work had been largely responsible. Despite the praise, Harnack could not avoid a caveat: "The strict construction of the evangelical principle which Ritschl has inculcated is, from the point of view of dogmatics, certainly justified; but one dare not apply it automatically to the phenomena of the period of the Reformation."⁶⁷ Adolf Harnack's independence over against the confessionalism of his youth as well as the liberalism of his later years is expressed both piquantly and subtly in a footnote which, in opposition to Denifle, proves that the relation of

nominalism to Luther's doctrine of predestination had been studied long since by various Protestant scholars—including Theodosius Harnack and Albrecht Ritschl.⁶⁸

The opposition to Denifle, as we have mentioned earlier, was the occasion for some of Harnack's most extensive discussions of Luther. Alongside his heritage from *Neuluthertum* and his debt to Ritschl, a third element of Harnack's inheritance that affected his interpretation of the Reformation was the defense of the Protestant tradition against Roman Catholicism. The names of three Roman Catholic scholars who dealt with Luther are important here: Denifle, Weiss, and Hartmann Grisar, S.J. In addition, Harnack was provoked to defend Luther against the attacks contained in the encyclical issued by Pius X on May 26, 1910, to commemorate the three-hundredth anniversary of the canonization of Charles Borromeo.⁶⁹ The publication of the encyclical stirred up not only a confessional but a political storm in Germany. Harnack felt obliged to address himself to this political storm also,⁷⁰ but his primary attention was devoted to the Pope's repetition of the old slanders against the Reformation. Relations between Protestants and Roman Catholics had come a long way, especially in Germany, and even the Roman Catholic interpretation of the Reformation had undergone drastic revision as a result of scholarly work on both sides. But Pius X had apparently learned none of this, and therefore his encyclical, still speaking "the absolute and slanderous language of previous centuries,"⁷¹ failed to come to terms with the meaning of the Reformation. He should "ask around whether there is even one eminent Catholic historian in Germany who agrees with him."⁷²

What Harnack discerned in the encyclical was present also in the Roman Catholic biographies of Luther, namely, the contrast between the polemical and the historical way of looking at the Reformation. It should be noted that, despite his espousal of the Protestant cause against Roman Catholicism, Harnack looked not to one confessional form of polemics against the other, but to the honesty of historical scholarship against the dogmatisms on both sides, as the cure for the excesses of Roman Catholic caricature.⁷³ Where such scholarship appeared in Roman Catholic works on the Reformation, Harnack hailed them, and more than once he praised them over the Lutheran hagiography of his own time. Despite the scholarship, however, and despite great erudition, these biographies persisted in repeating the old slanders and in cultivating the old tone-deafness to the religious accents of the Reformation. And so Denifle had "used the framework

of his book in order to perpetrate a brand of infamy so tendentious, so objectively untrue, and so frightfully vulgar that its equal has not been thought up in our time even by second-rate scribblers.”⁷⁴ Weiss had “put together all the ‘heresies’ of the fourteenth and fifteenth century from the Atlantic Ocean to the Bohemian forests in order then to determine that Luther is a combination of all of them and disappears in them completely.”⁷⁵ And Grisar, too, had still retained “remnants of the vulgar-Catholic way of battling,”⁷⁶ even though his researches had led him a long way from the earlier screeds.

HARNACK'S VOCATION AND LUTHER

It is significant for Harnack's picture of Luther that in relation to all three elements we have been summarizing—the Lutheran traditionalism of his father, the new theology of Ritschl, and the Protestant defense of the Reformation against Roman Catholic slanders—he appealed from dogma to history and from polemics to *Wissenschaft*. As G. Wayne Glick has suggested, “the first use [of the term *Wissenschaft*] is in his lecture, fittingly, on ‘Martin Luther, in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Wissenschaft und der Bildung.’”⁷⁷ Therefore Harnack insisted throughout that “I am not indeed making this judgment as a Protestant historian.”⁷⁸ And so the distinction between “inheritance” and “vocation,” while useful, is not rigid; for Harnack's vocation was to apply the methods of historical *Wissenschaft* to the materials of his inheritance, even and especially to what he had inherited, directly and indirectly, from Martin Luther.

As was pointed out earlier, Adolf von Harnack was not a “Luther scholar” in the sense that Theodosius Harnack and Karl Holl were. Scattered throughout the chapters on Luther in the *Dogmengeschichte* are critical *obiter dicta* aimed at the Luther scholars. Thus “the most recent Luther research” had regularly denied that Luther's teaching between 1519 and 1523 took a course that promised more thoroughgoing reforms than were in fact carried out, but Harnack remained unconvinced and continued to see in the theology of those years the abiding significance of Luther's thought.⁷⁹ Similarly, Luther's conservatism in the use of traditional dogmatic terminology had provided the occasion for some Luther scholars “to work out complicated schemas for Luther's teaching, and so at the hands of the epigons Luther's theology took on the same complicated and unimpressive form as Paul's doctrine in biblical theology.”⁸⁰ Har-

nack did not identify which works by which “epigons” he had in mind here, but it seems that the two-volume work of Julius Köstlin may be one of these.⁸¹ Köstlin had been one of the conservative theologians to whose judgment Harnack’s critics had appealed in 1888, but, together with his colleagues, he had refused to join those critics in their attack.⁸² For his part, Harnack acknowledged Köstlin’s “extensive knowledge of Luther,” but, alluding to John 3:10, he added: “This master of Israel . . . has been superseded in many cardinal points or has misunderstood them” in the first place.⁸³ Thus Harnack set himself apart both from the confessionalism of theologians like Köstlin and from the historical judgments of more recent scholars.

Nevertheless, as we have already noted briefly at the beginning of this essay, the principal difference between the scholarship of the “Luther renaissance” and the *Wissenschaft* of Adolf von Harnack’s vocation as a historian lies in his lifelong insistence that a thorough grounding in the history of the early church was indispensable not only to the historian of dogma (as, presumably, everyone would have to concede) but also to the historian of the Reformation. A methodological corollary to this insistence is Harnack’s constant effort to place Luther’s theology into the context of ancient dogma. He was certainly aware of the need for new and more thorough research into the later Middle Ages,⁸⁴ and against both Denifle and Weiss he rejected the claim that such research would diminish Luther’s genius and originality. But some of the most penetrating insights in the closing sections of the *Dogmengeschichte* are those in which Harnack the patristic scholar looks at the program of Luther’s Reformation and at its outcome.

In voicing this insistence upon the priority of early church history, Harnack was not, he asserted, speaking *pro domo*.⁸⁵ On the contrary, such a conclusion was required by the objective demands of historical and theological scholarship. Without naming names, he attacked “church historians who have gained a reputation as notable scholars in neutral studies, but who, because of a lack of study, simply cultivate bad tradition in ancient church history.” As he was not speaking *pro domo*, so he was not propounding the party line of any particular theological tendency. “Everywhere, and so also here, what is decisive is the acquisition of expertise; everything else will take care of itself.” All the decisive problems in church history lay in the early field. It was therefore reasonable to demand of every church historian that he be at home in this field, regardless of what

other periods or problems he might wish to investigate. For "the center of gravity of church history as a scholarly field lies in the history of the church and of dogma during the first six centuries." It was likewise reasonable to demand of the future minister that he acquire a basic knowledge of this area. Long after the details of lectures on church history were forgotten, he should still possess the historical sophistication that comes from a knowledge of how catholic Christianity arose; without such sophistication he would be at the mercy of church periodicals and of a falsified tradition.

All of this was stated in a memorandum dated September 27, 1888, when Harnack was departing from Marburg for Berlin. Although the original occasion of the memorandum was the search for Harnack's successor at Marburg, it set forth a position which transcended that occasion. His daughter and biographer calls its closing sentences "the *Leitmotiv* of Harnack's scholarly labors."⁸⁶ No less is it the *Leitmotiv* of his interpretation of Luther. We have already quoted Harnack's comparison of Luther with Athanasius and Cyril, but perhaps the most interesting graph of the lines between Harnack's interpretation of Luther and his vocation as an historian of the early church is to be seen in the connections and contrasts he notes between Luther and three early Christian thinkers: Paul, Marcion, and Augustine. Harnack's contribution to the literature on these three figures entitled him to speak also about their affinities with Luther; conversely, his debt to Luther is visible in his description of those affinities.

Harnack's research on Paul was the expression of a conviction closely related to the one just cited about the indispensability of early church history. As he wrote to Holl in 1905, "We church historians whose center of gravity lies in ancient church history must, I believe, be ready whenever the occasion demands to expound a book of the New Testament. The division between the New Testament and ancient church history is derived from the time of the superstitious reverence for the canon."⁸⁷ For our purposes, however, it is more to the point to note that Harnack had done a great deal of research into Paulinism as a theological type, so that when he came to speak of Luther's relation to Paul, he was able to illumine that relation with his studies of how Paul had been understood—and misunderstood—in the first centuries of Christian history. Among many other significant comments on Paulinism, one deserves to be quoted because of its direct relevance to Harnack's picture of Luther. After citing Charles Bigg's well-known epigram about Pauline reactions as

the critical epochs of theology and of the church,⁸⁸ Harnack continued:

"One could write the history of dogma as the history of Pauline reactions in the church, and one would in this way hit all the turning-points of that history. Marcion after the Apostolic Fathers; Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen after the Apologists; Augustine after the Fathers of the Greek church; the great reformers of the Middle Ages from Agobard to Wessel in the bosom of the medieval church; Luther after scholasticism; Jansenism after Trent—everywhere it was Paul who effected the reformations in these men. Paulinism has preserved itself as a ferment in the history of dogma; it has never been a basis [for it]. As in Paul himself it possessed that significance in opposition to Jewish Christianity, so it has continued through history."⁸⁹

The interpretation of Paul as the great ferment in early Christianity has by now become virtually canonical in Protestant biblical and historical scholarship, which has emphasized the conflict between Peter and Paul as a symbol of Paul's discontinuity with the primitive orthodoxy of immediately pre-catholic Christianity.⁹⁰ Whatever its validity as an interpretation of Paul and of Paulinism—and it does seem to be almost as much an oversimplification as is the naive *Gleichschaltung* of Paul with that orthodoxy in much of traditional exegesis⁹¹—it enables Protestant Luther scholarship to interpret Luther, despite his dogmatic orthodoxy, as the most authentic expression of the Pauline ferment. That is clearly how Harnack interpreted him. So close was Luther to Paul, for example, in his conception of the relation between law and gospel that Harnack did not think it necessary to expound Luther on this point, having already expounded Paul.⁹² In fact, the historian of the early church felt entitled to say of Luther: "He alone once more caught the meaning of the Pauline sentence [Rom. 14:23] that whatever is not of faith is sin."⁹³ Dilthey's winged word, "I deny categorically that the sum of the religiousness of the Reformation is contained in the renewal of the Pauline doctrine of justification through faith," had to be seriously qualified.⁹⁴ For Luther had gone through the same experience as Paul, in contrast to other Christian thinkers, including Augustine.⁹⁵ And therefore Harnack could, in the closing paragraphs of the *Dogmengeschichte*, bracket the Reformer with the apostle, and both of them with their Lord: "As in Jesus himself and no differently in Paul and in Luther . . ."⁹⁶

Of course, when one speaks of "Paulinism" in the history of the early church and identifies Paulinism with the radical implications of

a certain interpretation of Luther, authentic "Paulinists" of such a stripe tend to be difficult to find. Irenaeus, for example, had many features in his teaching that Harnack had to acknowledge. Thus "the statement of Irenaeus, 'If he did not truly suffer, there is no grace in him, since there was no suffering' is the foundation, strictly maintained, of the entire Christianity and the entire theology of the West."⁹⁷ And in a flash of insight Harnack proposed that Tertullian was to Irenaeus as Calvin was to Luther.⁹⁸ Athanasius reminded Harnack of Luther even more. In the course of a comparison between the genius of Augustine and the more modest brilliance of Athanasius, Harnack affirmed that "Athanasius was a reformer, albeit not in the highest sense of the word," and he went on to compare the stance of Athanasius with that of Luther.⁹⁹ In spite of these parallels, however, Marcion was the one figure in the history of Christian doctrine between Paul and Augustine who deserved to be ranked somewhere within range of Luther.

"Marcion and his church," wrote Harnack, "must be given, *mutatis mutandis*, as eminent a place in the second century—and a similar one, in many ways with more far-reaching significance—as the Reformation in the sixteenth century.... Christendom (the church) before Marcion and after Marcion: this is a much greater difference than the Western church before the Reformation and after the Reformation!"¹⁰⁰ In the course of his lifelong reflection on Marcion, Harnack seems to have hit upon many analogies between Marcion and later Christian thinkers. A monograph on Marcion and Augustine would be quite useful, he suggested.¹⁰¹ The radical Paulinism of Marcion showed intriguing affinities with that of the Tübingen school, as Harnack sought to show in a lengthy footnote.¹⁰² And several times he proposed that Marcion's ideas about an ethic of love and about the rejection of the world had found a modern expression in the religion of Tolstoy, who "is a thoroughly Marcionite Christian."¹⁰³ But the deepest theological consanguinity was with Luther. Stripped of its quasi-Gnostic language, the theology of Marcion was, according to Harnack, a theology of faith in the revelation of God in Christ, casting away all trust in the natural religious disposition of man. And therefore "*Luther's concept of faith is the one which comes closest to that of Marcion.*"¹⁰⁴ Thus Marcion "really was what he claimed to be, a disciple of Paul, who took up the work and the battle of the apostle as a genuine reformer. It is understandable that Neander could call him 'the first Protestant.'"¹⁰⁵ Harnack's critics have not been convinced by his portrait of Marcion

and have seen in it more than a few traces of Luther's influence. Thus the line Paul-Marcion-Luther in Harnack's thought could (as Harnack once remarked in a *bon mot* about Marcion's reading of the Old Testament) be read from right to left as well as from left to right.

Usually, of course, it is with Augustine that Luther must be compared—a process that began even in the sixteenth century, both among his critics and among his admirers. To this comparison few scholars brought a more balanced preparation than Harnack. He once noted that Holl had been more able to handle the "either/or's" than the "both/and's" of Christian history, and that therefore even Augustine had not been a completely sympathetic figure to him.¹⁰⁶ Harnack, by contrast, went at the study of Augustine with genuine admiration and profound involvement. When he had finished the book on Marcion (who was certainly one of the either/or's), Harnack wrote that he was drawn by the prospect of a book on Augustine, but feared that he would largely repeat what he or others had already said.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, he did go ahead to publish his selection of "maxims and reflections" from the works of Augustine, with comments.¹⁰⁸ But as early as 1888, in a lecture that went through several editions and translations, he had declared: "Between Paul the apostle and Luther the reformer the Christian church possessed no one to compare with Augustine."¹⁰⁹ Characteristically, Harnack suggested that the only book with which he could compare Augustine's *Confessions* was Goethe's *Faust*.¹¹⁰ The comparison itself tells us at least as much about Harnack as it does about Augustine or Goethe;¹¹¹ as Agnes von Zahn-Harnack suggests, "as in Goethe, so here [in Augustine] he found an inexhaustible source of wisdom about life, knowledge about man, and knowledge about God."¹¹²

Yet both history and theology demanded that the connection between Augustine and Luther be examined. Augustine's understanding of faith as trust had existed for more than a millennium alongside the official dogma, only to emerge in Luther.¹¹³ And so in the theology of Luther "the work of Augustine is finally completed, but also far transcended. For by going back to Paulinism this great man . . . had already begun the process of reshaping the dominant dogmatic tradition and of returning theology to faith. But [Augustine] the skeptic had come to a halt at the formal authorities of Catholicism, and the Neo-Platonist refused to surrender his [mystical] soaring in the One and the All."¹¹⁴ This break with tradition, partly evident in Augustine, became a fact only in Luther. Augustine had been unable to specify the object of faith with preci-

sion. To him the salvation conferred by divine grace always remained dark and mysterious, but to Luther it means the forgiveness of sins.¹¹⁵ This meant, according to Harnack, that "before Luther no one, not even his master Augustine, had taken sin so seriously as he."¹¹⁶ It meant, on the other hand, that while Augustine had stressed the sacraments as the means by which the mystery of saving grace was conferred, Luther stressed the word of forgiveness.¹¹⁷ And when Luther forsook this position, as Harnack believed he had in the eucharistic controversies, he fell right back into the Augustinian ambiguities.¹¹⁸ The paradox of Luther's relation to Augustine was nowhere more evident than in the doctrine of justification; for "in that terminology which Augustine shares with Luther there is expressed only his [Augustine's] vulgar Catholicism, while in that which Augustine has in common with the doctrine of justification at Trent . . . there lies the element which joins him with Luther."¹¹⁹ Both the profundity of this judgment and the contrasting superficiality of some of the judgments quoted a little earlier make it regrettable that Harnack never took it upon himself to compose a full-length examination of the line Paul-Augustine-Luther, but even these tantalizingly brief comments manifest the special perspective which Harnack's vocation as a historian of early Christianity brought to his picture of Luther.

For many readers, however, Harnack's vocation, or at any rate his reputation, was largely identified not with his *Dogmengeschichte* and related works, but with *Das Wesen des Christentums*, the phenomenally successful and vigorously debated lectures which he delivered in the winter semester of 1899/1900 to a general audience at Berlin. These lectures have become, and not without reason, the classic illustration of theological reductionism at work.¹²⁰ Harnack was not afraid of the word "reduction." After all, he had learned to appreciate it in Ritschl, who "introduced his reduction and improved upon the Enlightenment theologians of the eighteenth century, proceeding on the basis of a concept of God that had been derived from the gospel and following the principal thoughts of Luther."¹²¹ Indeed, Luther had undertaken the very same assignment of a massive reduction, as Harnack insisted repeatedly.¹²² Therefore in the *Wesen* the achievement of Protestantism is described as that of having "reduced [religion] to its essential factors, to the word of God and to faith," for "in the history of religions every really important reformation is always, first and foremost, a critical reduction to principles. . . . This critical reduction to principles Luther accomplished in the sixteenth

century.¹²³ It seems clear that Harnack was proposing to accomplish a similar reduction at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In a deeper sense, it was not only *Das Wesen des Christentums*, but his entire historical vocation, including especially the *Dogmengeschichte*, which Harnack saw as a continuation of the work of Luther. Later editions of the *Dogmengeschichte*, therefore, closed with the sentence: "Come what may, as [faith] can never lose its close connection with the history of the New Testament, so it can never be strange to those experiences which made Luther into the Reformer."¹²⁴ To be sure, Harnack knew that "with historical scholarship, if one possesses nothing else, no one can accomplish renewal in the church."¹²⁵ Nevertheless, as Ernst Benz has put it, "Harnack's conception of the history of dogma is basically only the application and further development of a thought that is genuinely Luther's."¹²⁶ His Roman Catholic opponents also claimed to discern affinities between his reductionism and Luther's.¹²⁷ If some of us today have come to draw from Luther's attitude toward tradition theological conclusions exactly opposite to Harnack's, it has nevertheless been from Harnack's historical work and from our own efforts to continue it that we have derived the means for going beyond him. Adolf von Harnack may not have been a "Luther scholar" in the conventional sense; but by placing Luther and the Reformation into historical context, he not only showed the transcendence of Luther over his own tradition, but also enabled his readers to do their own research and to make up their own minds. And this, too, is an essential element of the heritage of the Reformation.

N O T E S

¹ Wilhelm Pauck, "Adolph von Harnack's Interpretation of Church History," *The Heritage of the Reformation* (2nd ed.; Glencoe: Free Press, 1961), p. 350.

² Wilhelm Pauck, "A Brief Criticism of Barth's *Dogmatics*," *ibid.*, p. 358.

³ Wilhelm Pauck, "Luther and Bucer," *ibid.*, p. 382, n. 18.

⁴ Wilhelm Pauck, "General Introduction," *Luther: Lecture on Romans*, "The Library of Christian Classics," XV (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), xvii.

⁵ Adolf von Harnack, "Karl Holl; Rede bei der Gedächtnisfeier der Universität Berlin am 12. Juni 1926," *Adolf von Harnack: Aus der Werkstatt des Vollendeten*, edited by Axel von Harnack (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1930), p. 280. (Henceforth I shall cite the works of Adolf von Harnack by their titles, without giving his name except when necessary; unless otherwise stated, translations are my own.)

⁶ Karl Holl, "Was verstand Luther unter Religion?" *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I, *Luther* (7th ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1948), 1-110.

⁷ "Denkschrift zum 27. September 1888," quoted in Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack* (2nd ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1951), p. 130.

⁸ Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, *Panarion*, and *De Fide*, edited by Karl Holl and completed by Hans Lietzmann, "Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte" (3 vols.; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915-33).

⁹ "Karl Holl," p. 281.

¹⁰ Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode* (reprint ed.; Graz: Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt, 1957), I, 22, n. 2.

¹¹ "Martin Luther in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Wissenschaft und der Bildung," *Reden und Aufsätze*, I (2nd ed.; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1906), 141-69. On its various editions, cf. Friedrich Smend, *Adolf von Harnack: Verzeichnis seiner Schriften* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1927), no. 213.

¹² "Martin Luther, the Prophet of the Reformation," *Outlook*, LIII (1896) 564-66.

¹³ *Martin Luther und die Grundlegung der Reformation: Festschrift der Stadt Berlin zum 31. Oktober 1917* (106-110. Tausend; Berlin: Weidmann, 1928).

¹⁴ "Die Reformation und ihre Voraussetzung," *Erforschtes und Erlebtes* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1923), pp. 72-140.

¹⁵ "Die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Reformation Luthers," *Aus der Werkstatt des Vollendeten*, pp. 86-99; cf. the essay of 1899, "Die Bedeutung der Reformation innerhalb der allgemeinen Religionsgeschichte," *Reden und Aufsätze* (Giessen: J. Ricker [Alfred Töpelmann], 1904), II, 295-326.

¹⁶ *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (5th ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1932), III, 808-96. Unless otherwise specified, I shall be quoting the *Dogmengeschichte* from this edition.

¹⁷ The German sentence reads: "Wenn er die unheilvolle Verbindung der Religionslehre mit der Philosophie auseinanderriss, richtete er gegen Jene [the scholastics] seine Waffen," *Dogmengeschichte* (3rd ed.; Leipzig and Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1897), III, 730. The English translation reads: "When he severed the baleful bond between religious doctrine and philosophy, he was turning his weapons against the *Jesuits*," *History of Dogma*, translated from the third German edition by Neil Buchanan (New York: Dover Books, 1961), VII, 173. (Italics in both cases are mine.)

¹⁸ Quoted in G. Wayne Glick, *The Reality of Christianity: a Study of Adolf von Harnack as Historian and Theologian*, "Makers of Modern Theology," edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (New York: Harper, 1967), p. 69.

¹⁹ Harnack to Martin Rade, November 6, 1899, quoted in von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

²⁰ M. C. Slotemaker de Bruine, *Adolf von Harnack's Kritische Dogmengeschiedenis* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1933), pp. 75-90.

²¹ Robert Kübel, "Über die Darstellung des Christentums und der Theologie Luthers in Harnacks *Dogmengeschichte III*," *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, II (1891) 13-57; the quotation appears on p. 57.

²² *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 808, n. 1.

²³ Heinrich Denifle, O.P., *Luther in rationalistischer und christlicher*

Beleuchtung: Prinzipielle Auseinandersetzung mit A. Harnack und R. Seeberg (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1904), p. 43.

²⁴ "Pater Denifle, Pater Weiss und Luther" (1909), *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1911), I, 295-332.

²⁵ Hans Freiherr von Soden, "Harnack, Adolf," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1927-32), II, 1633. On his family connections with Harnack, cf. von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-33; on his critique of Harnack's *Marcion*, cf. Glick, *op. cit.*, p. 116, n. 20.

²⁶ Cf. Karl Hans Windschitl, *Adolf von Harnack: ein Rufer in unsere Zeit*, "Freies Christentum," Heft 22/23 (1957), p. 15.

²⁷ For example, on his relations with Alfred Loisy, cf. Giuseppe Bonacorsi, *Harnack e Loisy o le recenti polemiche intorno all' essenza del cristianesimo* (Florence: Libreria editrice Fiorentina, 1904); on Luther, see pp. 245-50.

²⁸ I have borrowed this distinction from the subtitle of Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, I, *Inheritance and Vocation* (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1935). In view of Luther's place in the history of the term *Beruf*, it seems only just to reclaim it for this essay.

²⁹ Cf. Heinrich Wittram, *Die Kirche bei Theodosius Harnack: Ekklesiologie und Praktische Theologie*, "Arbeiten zur Pastoraltheologie" (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), II, especially pp. 47-103.

³⁰ Otto Wolff, *Die Haupttypen der neueren Lutherforschung* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1938), pp. 63 ff.

³¹ Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther im Spiegel der deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1955), p. 47.

³² *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 809, n.

³³ Quoted in von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

³⁴ "Die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Reformation Luthers," p. 87.

³⁵ "Martin Luther in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Wissenschaft und der Bildung," p. 159.

³⁶ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 814.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 863-96.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 876, n. 1 on dogma, and p. 856 on liturgy.

³⁹ *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (reprint of 2nd ed.; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), pp. 215-23; cf. von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-41.

⁴⁰ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 862.

⁴¹ Harnack to Martin Rade, November 6, 1899, quoted in von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

⁴² "Was wir von der römischen Kirche lernen und nicht lernen sollen" (1891), *Reden und Aufsätze*, II, 255.

⁴³ "Das Mönchtum: seine Ideale und seine Geschichte" (1881), *Reden und Aufsätze*, I, 81-139; cf. Smend, *op. cit.* (n. 11), no. 137.

⁴⁴ *What Is Christianity?* translated by Thomas Bailey Saunders (Torchbook edition; New York: Harper, 1957), p. 288.

⁴⁵ Ernst Benz, "Adolf von Harnack zum 100. Geburtstag (7. 5. 1951)," *Jahrbuch der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1952), p. 223.

⁴⁶ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 903. (I have adapted here the translation I originally published in *The Riddle of Roman Catholicism* [New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1959], p. 230.)

⁴⁷ Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, edited by Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper, 1967), p. 219.

⁴⁸ "Albrecht Ritschl; Rede zum hundertsten Geburtstag am 30. April 1922 in Bonn gehalten," *Erforschtes und Erlebtes*, p. 341.

⁴⁹ Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie mit besonderer Beziehung auf seine Versöhnungs- und Erlösungslehre* (new ed.; Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1927), II, 1-19.

⁵⁰ Adolf Harnack to Albrecht Ritschl, July 31, 1886, quoted with Ritschl's (undated) reply in von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁵¹ Cf. Philip Hefner, *Faith and the Vitalities of History: a Theological Study Based on the Work of Albrecht Ritschl*, "Makers of Modern Theology," edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (New York: Harper, 1966), pp. 32-70.

⁵² Cf. *Dogmengeschichte*, I, 40, n. 1, a lengthy footnote discussing the importance of Ritschl for the method of the history of dogma.

⁵³ Harnack to Ritschl, December 19, 1885, quoted in von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁵⁴ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 899-900, n. 3.

⁵⁵ Wilhelm Pauck, "A Defense of Liberalism," *Heritage of the Reformation*, p. 334.

⁵⁶ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 857, n. 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 831-32, n. 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 869-70, n. 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 873.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 343, n. 3 on Bernard of Clairvaux; also p. 346, n. 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 899-900, n. 3.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 869-70, n. 1.

⁶³ Cf. E. Pfennigsdorf, *Vergleich der dogmatischen Systeme von R. A. Lipsius und A. Ritschl, zugleich Kritik und Würdigung derselben* (Gotha: Andreas Perthes, 1896), which concentrates on the philosophical basis for the theological differences between Lipsius and Ritschl.

⁶⁴ Richard Adelbert Lipsius, *Luthers Lehre von der Busse* (Braunschweig: C. A. Schwetschke und Sohn [Appelhans & Pfenningstorff], 1892).

⁶⁵ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 842-43, n. 1.

⁶⁶ "Die Bedeutung der Reformation innerhalb der allgemeinen Religionsgeschichte," p. 297.

⁶⁷ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 773 n. 1; cf. also p. 906.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 868-69, n. 1.

⁶⁹ Pius X, "Editae saepe," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, II (1910) 357-80; on the storm raised by the encyclical, cf. Joseph Selbst, "Das kirchliche Leben im Jahre 1910," *Kirchliches Handbuch für das katholische Deutschland*, III (1911) 107-14.

⁷⁰ Cf. "Konfession und Politik" (1911), *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben*, I, 287-93.

⁷¹ "Die Borromäus-Enzyklika," *ibid.*, p. 285.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁷³ Cf. Glick, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-104.

⁷⁴ *Theologische Literatur-Zeitung*, XXVIII (1903) 689-92.

⁷⁵ "Die Lutherbiographie Grisars" (1911), *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben*, I, 333.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁷⁷ Glick, *op. cit.*, p. 89, n. 10.

⁷⁸ "Pater Denifle, Pater Weiss und Luther," p. 328.

⁷⁹ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 864.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 835.

⁸¹ Julius Köstlin, *Luthers Theologie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und ihrem innern Zusammenhange* (2 vols., 2nd ed.; Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1883).

⁸² Cf. von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-21.

⁸³ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 838, n. 1.

⁸⁴ "Die Reformation und ihre Voraussetzung," especially pp. 100-04.

⁸⁵ "Denkschrift vom 27. September 1888," excerpted in von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁸⁸ Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (The Bampton Lectures; Oxford: Clarendon, 1886), pp. 53, 283.

⁸⁹ *Dogmengeschichte*, I, 155.

⁹⁰ Cf. Martin Werner, *Die Entstehung des christlichen Dogmas problematisch dargestellt* (Bern-Leipzig: Paul Haupt, 1941), pp. 139-44: "Das problematische Verhältnis zur Lehre des Paulus als Ausgangspunkt der Entwicklung"; Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964), pp. 215-30.

⁹¹ Hans Küng, "'Early Catholicism' in the New Testament as a Problem in Controversial Theology," *The Council in Action*, translated by Cecily Hastings (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), pp. 159-95; Ernst Käsemann, "Paul and Nascent Catholicism," translated by Wilfred F. Bunge, *Journal for Theology and the Church*, III (1967) 14-27, in reply.

⁹² *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 842.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 839.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 843, n. 1.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 823.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 906.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 618, n. 1.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 351-52.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 22-23.

¹⁰⁰ *Marcion*, p. 215, n. 1.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 218, n. 1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 208, n. 1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 232; cf. also p. 226, 228.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225 (italics are Harnack's).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹⁰⁶ "Karl Holl," p. 279.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

¹⁰⁸ *Augustinus: Reflexionen und Maximen, aus seinen Werken gesammelt und übersetzt* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1922).

¹⁰⁹ "Augustins Konfessionen" (1888), *Reden und Aufsätze*, II, 53.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 63 ff.

¹¹¹ "Die Religion Goethes in der Epoche seiner Vollendung," *Erforschtes und Erlebtes*, pp. 141-70; cf. his *Martin Luther* of 1917, which begins with a quotation from Goethe (p. 3), also "Die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Reformation Luthers," p. 88. Harnack suggested that an essay on "Marcion and Augustine" would be interesting; so would an essay on "Harnack's Goethe."

¹¹² Von Zahn-Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

¹¹³ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 812.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 861.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 823, n. 2.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 839.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 851; p. 154, n. 1.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹²⁰ Cf. Glick, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-317.

¹²¹ "Albrecht Ritschl," p. 338.

¹²² *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 823-24; "Die Reformation und ihre Voraussetzung," p. 117; "Die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Reformation Luthers," p. 95.

¹²³ *What Is Christianity?* pp. 269, 270.

¹²⁴ *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 908.

¹²⁵ "Die Lutherbiographie Grisars," p. 337.

¹²⁶ Benz, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹²⁷ Cf. "Pater Denifle, Pater Weiss und Luther," p. 317.

ERNST TROELTSCH ON LUTHER

KLAUS PENZEL

VEN A cursory glance at the four volumes of Ernst Troeltsch's *Gesammelte Schriften*,¹ which contain most though by no means all of his writings, immediately reveals that they are almost equally divided between historical and theological-philosophical studies. Yet it is correct to say that Troeltsch—besides Harnack the most brilliant and influential German spokesman for liberal Protestantism after the turn of this century—is generally better known for his historical studies than for his constructive work in systematic theology and philosophy. To be sure, there existed throughout his life a somewhat curious and unique relationship between the three dominant concerns of his stupendously active mind, viz., history, theology, and philosophy.

Troeltsch tells us that from early youth his desire for knowledge, like Dilthey's, was directed to the historical world. But when he enrolled at the university in 1884 he decided to study theology, explaining this decision toward the end of his life in the following characteristic manner: "In theology one had at that time almost the only access to metaphysics and at the same time one had extremely fascinating historical problems. And metaphysics and history were the two tension-filled problems which, together and at the same time, from the very beginning excited me."² Ten years later, at the age of 29, he assumed the chair in systematic theology at the University of Heidelberg, and in 1914 he finally joined the philosophical faculty at the University of Berlin, where he continued to teach until his death, at age 58, in 1923. Needless to say, only those who keep in mind this unique combination of historical, theological, and philosophical interests in Troeltsch's career and thought will be able to do justice to the whole and to every part of his multifaceted lifework and to lay bare its innermost springs.³

That Troeltsch, however, is primarily remembered as an historian is not due merely to the prominent place which historical studies occupy among his published works, but also to the highly controversial nature of the more important of these studies. Among German scholars none of these studies has provoked more interest—and has

been discussed more heatedly by friend and foe alike—than his portrayal of Luther and the Reformation. To be sure, in the English-speaking world Troeltsch is best known for his massive *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*,⁴ a characteristically brilliant and diffusely written history of Christian social ethics, which its author occasionally compared to Harnack's *History of Dogma*.⁵ Even of those who have never made the effort of wading through its more than 1,000 pages, most are aware, at any rate, that it is centered in the justly famous distinction between "church," "sect," and "mysticism" as the three sociological types by which the Christian faith has related itself to the various and ever-changing aspects of the processes of society in history. Nevertheless, Troeltsch's equally suggestive studies in the history of the Reformation and its relationship to the modern world, even though one of them is available in English under the title *Protestantism and Progress*,⁶ have apparently so far failed to arouse the kind of scholarly interest in the English-speaking world that they most certainly deserve. The following essay, then, aspires to nothing more than attempting belatedly to familiarize American readers with Troeltsch's understanding of Luther and his Reformation; it hopes to do in English what has already been done repeatedly—one is tempted to say, exhaustively—by various German authors.⁷

I

To begin with, one should note that Troeltsch, characteristically, was not primarily interested in Luther himself, nor in the Reformation as such, nor, for that matter, in historical studies as a means merely of reviving the past. He obviously agreed with Dilthey who did not consider it "worthwhile to be an historian if it were not also a way to understand the world" rather than with Ranke whose reason for studying the past had been his desire to discover "what really happened."⁸ As Troeltsch once put it: "The final goal of all history is always the understanding of the present."⁹ And this implied, of course, the further and less controversial conviction that it is impossible to understand the present and act responsibly in it without knowing the past whence it arose.

Thus, when Troeltsch turned his attention to the Reformation, he did not aim at treating it in isolation from subsequent developments nor did he try to understand it strictly in its own terms; rather, he was directed to it by his desire, which he acknowledged to be one of the guiding interests of his life's work, to analyze and comprehend

the modern intellectual and religious situation and to clarify Christianity's role and place in it. But this, as he soon discovered, proved to be a task far more complex and difficult than had generally been believed earlier. Most German Protestants since Lessing had hailed Luther and the Reformation as the fountainhead of the modern world; many of them, from Hegel to Ritschl, had considered modern Protestantism, i.e., the Protestantism that tries to come to terms with the modern world, to be an authentic development of the essential ideas and principles of the Reformation. On the other hand, Troeltsch's own insights into the nature of the medieval and modern periods in the history of Western culture led him to challenge these general assumptions. He described the modern world at great length and in a variety of ways, readily admitting its many contradictions and, like his contemporaries Dilthey and Max Weber, darkly perceiving that its outcome in his own time threatened to be an "anarchy of values."¹⁰ But he also considered "the enormous extension and intensification of the thought of freedom and personality" its most valuable feature,¹¹ and it was clear to him that the modern world's most distinguishing marks were these: (1) its culture was secular and autonomous in all of its branches, (2) its presupposition, its origin was the dissolution of the culture of the medieval world. The medieval world he described as a unified, authoritarian culture, religiously determined and ecclesiastically directed. When its foundation, the supernaturalism of biblical and Catholic Christianity, collapsed, then a new foundation, that of the autonomy and self-sufficiency of human reason, took its place, and from this new foundation the world of modern culture had emerged. Since when, then, had the modern world been in the making? In his autobiographical essay, "My Books," Troeltsch replied laconically: "The answer of my studies was: since the Enlightenment,"¹²—and not, as should be added, since the Reformation. Thus, Troeltsch was led to consider the question: What is the true position of the Reformation vis-a-vis the Middle Ages and the modern world? It was this question, the answer to which would obviously be indispensable to his efforts at clarifying Christianity's role and place in the modern world, that was to dominate and to guide his studies of the 16th-century Age of Reformation.

One only needs to add that in the light of this question Troeltsch also dealt with Luther. This is remarkable if only because it meant that Troeltsch lacked to an unusual degree most of those interests that commonly guide the student of Luther. He was not primarily

drawn by the biographer's fascination with Luther's personality and life, nor did he have the church historian's single-minded eagerness to define Luther's place in the history of the organized church and its doctrines; neither was he a partisan follower of Luther, intent on reviving and propagandizing his theological views. And farthest from his mind was any nationalistic preoccupation with extolling the virtues of the "German" Luther, the "Saxon Oak." The study of Luther was to be but an integral part of the task that he had set for himself, viz., to determine the place of the Reformation in the history of Western culture, and the pivotal role that Luther came to play in his investigations was simply due to the fact that the Reformation had been Luther's Reformation. It was quite obvious to Troeltsch that Luther had been the real religious genius of his age and that all the other Protestant churches and groups, at least as far as their religious views were concerned, had drawn their inspiration from him. We will shortly have to pay at least brief attention to the somewhat complicated story of the various texts and their editions in which Troeltsch studied Luther's work, starting from this particular cultural-historical point of view.

As already mentioned, Troeltsch's historical interests were not limited to his attempt at drawing a sharply etched profile of the modern intellectual and religious situation against the background of the history of Western culture since the Reformation. He soon became equally fascinated by the question as to what kind of Christian social organization and philosophy would constitute the most adequate response to the challenge of the dramatically changed social conditions of the modern world. Turning again to history, as was his habit, he analyzed the great Christian social structures and social philosophies of the past, with the purpose of discovering whether or not they were still workable today. (For the most part they were not, Troeltsch came to believe.) But his aim was even broader, since, under the readily acknowledged direct influence of Max Weber and—more remotely—of Karl Marx, he had set for himself the enormous additional task of tracing through history the interpenetration of Christianity and the social reality. The result of this sociological approach to church history and Troeltsch's most celebrated work, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches and Groups* (as an accurate translation of its title would have to read), offers another extended discussion of the sixteenth-century Reformation, which complements and completes Troeltsch's portrayal of Luther and his work. An essay, "Epochs and Types of the Social Philosophy of Christianity,"

is a valuable brief summary of the larger work and its sections on Luther.¹³

II

We now turn to a consideration of Troeltsch's interpretation of the Reformation, by first examining those of his studies which were controlled by his interest in analyzing the interplay of the forces of religion and culture in Luther's life and times. From his investigations there emerged the important central assertion that the historical position of the Reformation was that of a transitional stage between the medieval and modern periods in the history of Western culture. It was a transitional stage, not because its historical life had already been exhausted or because it had no life of its own, but because it combined in its nature the conflicting elements of two cultural periods. Like the ancient god Janus, it had two faces, one that looked backward into the Middle Ages and another that was turned toward the modern world. Troeltsch admitted that "such an opinion, of course, to a certain degree is the result of a synoptic view that is not exactly scientifically provable and therefore of a personal, subjective disposition toward the recognizable tendencies of history and the future." And yet he was firmly convinced that "a great deal" can be said for it even on purely factual and scientific grounds.¹⁴

Perhaps it should be noted first of all how closely Troeltsch, in his various attempts at describing the true inner nature of the Reformation, resembled a defense lawyer who variously and nimbly tries to state his case, always implying in his reasoning a neatly balanced "yes, but . . ." In the first edition of his book-length essay "Protestant Christianity and Church in Modern Times,"¹⁵ which appeared in 1906 and was the first major contribution to our theme, Troeltsch argued forcefully for the essentially medieval character of the Reformation, *but* admitted, if only on three (!) pages, that elements of modern culture were of course present in it. Second thoughts, brought on by a chorus of critical rejoinders that in Troeltsch's view Luther had never really emerged from his medieval shell, resulted in 1908 in the essay "Luther and the Modern World." Troeltsch now tried, more clearly and at greater length, to affirm Luther's modernity, *but* even now asserted, as strongly as before, the medieval form of Luther's thought. Those sections of this essay that emphasize Luther's modernity were incorporated into the second and final edition of "Protestant Christianity and Church in Modern Times"

(1909). In 1917, in "Luther and Protestantism," Troeltsch returned once more to the question of the Reformer's place in history, adding now, as we will see, another significant element to his portrayal of Luther. The essay, "Luther, Protestantism, and the Modern World," published posthumously in the final volume of the *Gesammelte Schriften*, is an editorial collation of his 1917 essay and of two large sections taken, with only minor changes, from the essay of 1908, making it the most easily accessible summary of Troeltsch's views on Luther's Reformation. Their most elaborate exposition is still to be found in the second edition of "Protestant Christianity and Church in Modern Times."¹⁶ It is quite obvious, then, that Troeltsch tried in ever new ways, here as elsewhere in a manner that must be called characteristically his own, to master his materials, which apparently always remained for him in a state of flux. But was he not correct in believing that the basic outline of his understanding of the Reformation had always been the same? Protestantism, as he asserted in what is perhaps the most sweeping but also the most incisive formulation of this understanding, "in its essential characteristics and manifestations is at first a reshaping of the medieval idea, and the nonmedieval, modern elements, which it undeniably contains in a significant way, come as such fully to the fore only after the first and classical form of Protestantism has broken down and disintegrated."¹⁷ This thesis, he claimed, is the only true key to an historical understanding of the origin and development of Protestantism; to it he steadfastly adhered throughout his various attempts at probing and analyzing the nature of Luther's Reformation in its relationship to the Middle Ages and the modern world.

Drawing primarily upon the relevant sections in the second edition of "Protestant Christianity and Church in Modern Times," I can give here no more than an outline of Troeltsch's richly textured, though often quite repetitious, elaboration of this thesis as it relates to Luther's work.

First of all we must raise the question: What evidence did Troeltsch adduce to substantiate his startling assertion that the Reformation was, on the one hand, merely "a reshaping of the medieval idea"? Obviously, Troeltsch did not share the assumption, cherished among Protestants since Luther's time, that the Reformation had been simply a return to biblical Christianity, particularly to the Pauline understanding of the gospel, in sharp contrast to the alleged corruptions and distortions inflicted by the medieval church upon the earlier and purer form of Christianity. The Catholic idea of the

church, which Troeltsch considered the determining force in the medieval culture of Western Europe, had, indeed, only a very narrow basis in the Christianity of New Testament times. But the Reformation, according to Troeltsch, continued the medieval idea of the church, deprived only of its hierarchy, priesthood, and priestly sacraments—with even its biblicism and its individualism subordinated to this idea of the church. The reformers, like their predecessors, conceived of the church primarily as an institution that acted as the exclusive administrator of the objectively given treasure of the divine revelation, the sole possessor of all truth and all salvation, and therefore also the creator and the unifying center of a universal Christian civilization. “Church-type” Christianity (a term the meaning of which Troeltsch was to explain fully in *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches and Groups*) was the common characteristic of both medieval Catholicism and classical Protestantism. Moreover, under the impact of the Augustinian tradition which dominated the Middle Ages, Luther read the Bible “with frightful one-sidedness” purely in the light of Paul’s theology, but even Paul himself he viewed only “through the medium of medieval questionings and needs.”¹⁸ For between the New Testament and Luther stood not only the Catholic idea of the church but also the Catholic doctrine of redemption, through which, after the pneumatological and eschatological elements of New Testament Christianity had been discarded, the never-ending quest for the certainty of salvation in the midst of an on-going sinful world had been made the all-absorbing center of medieval religious life. This doctrine in its central role was retained by Luther, though, to be sure, he differed from medieval Catholicism with regard to the means necessary for the attainment of the certainty of that salvation which is man’s highest end. Thus, it was quite obvious to Troeltsch that even Luther’s so-called rediscovery of Paul “issued directly from the very heart of the Catholic system, from the problems of monasticism, the sacrament of penance, predestination, and good works.”¹⁹ In short, the guiding ideas of the Reformation were but fresh shoots on the stem of medieval Catholicism, “new solutions to medieval problems.” And this Troeltsch endeavored to prove with regard to what he called the four “practical main creations”²⁰ of Protestantism: (1) its concept of grace and faith, (2) its ethic, (3) its state-church system, and (4) its doctrine of authority.

(1) According to Troeltsch, the deepest difference between the Reformation and medieval Catholicism was not the Protestant doc-

trine of justification, as the polemicists on both sides have always maintained, nor did the biblical orientation of the Reformation triumph, by means of this doctrine, over the scholasticism of the medieval theology. The Middle Ages and the Reformation had in common the same central religious concept, which was not the *pneuma* of Paul's theology but the *gratia* of the Latin tradition. To be sure, "grace," i.e., the saving power which the church alone dispenses, took on a new meaning in the Reformation: in Melanchthon's classical formulation, it was not *medicina* but *favor*, not a magic-sacramental "thing" but the disclosure of God's loving, forgiving disposition toward the sinner, not "matter" but "thought." Nevertheless the same concept, grace, dominated the religious life of both the Reformation and the Middle Ages. And it stood alongside the question of "justification," i.e., of how grace is received, even though "justification" in medieval Catholicism was the infusion of a saving substance by way of the sacraments, while with Luther it was the confirmation of the forgiveness of sin through the word of God, from which in either case, however, good works were said to issue. "It is the Catholic scheme; only the content is different."²¹

The case was similar as regards the concept of faith. Luther agreed with medieval Catholicism that the individual in the midst of a sinful world needs to appropriate continuously the grace which the church dispenses. Medieval Catholicism, however, had failed both to unify the processes by which the individual takes hold of his salvation and to find a single designation for them. Here Luther succeeded by turning the subjective appropriation of grace into "an entirely transparent and simple experience, into trust in God's gracious will to forgive sin,"²² and by giving to it the single name "faith." It is true that Luther's understanding of the subjective element in religion, which was as profound as it was simple, was almost entirely dependent upon Paul, but even so he did not revive Paul's theology, for he merely used a Pauline insight as a means of solving the all-important medieval question, viz., how the individual in the church can take hold of his salvation.

(2) It was even more self-evident to Troeltsch that even the Protestant ethic was merely a new solution to a medieval problem. The ethical problem which the Reformation inherited from medieval Catholicism had sprung from Christianity's contact with the Germanic barbarians at the outset of the Middle Ages. Here for the first time Christianity had been presented with the opportunity "to pursue the Christian idea to its ultimate consequence, an ethical formation

of the totality of life.”²³ When medieval Catholicism embraced the world of the Germanic peoples and planted and nourished in their midst a civilization permeated and governed by the principles of the Christian faith, it developed an ethic that was, as Troeltsch put it, “a complete cultural idea.”²⁴ This kind of ethic, however, presupposed a compromise between the radical spirit of the Christian ethic of love, as embodied, for instance, in the requirements of the Sermon on the Mount, and the ethical standards that regulate the reality of life in a sinful world. How this compromise was possible, Troeltsch explained by taking up his celebrated insight into the significance of the Stoic concept of natural law in the history of Christian social ethics. Early Catholicism had effected the identification of the *lex naturae* of Stoicism with the *lex Christi*—which was “one of the fundamental world-historical facts”²⁵—and thus had enabled Christianity to develop a comprehensive cultural ethic—even as the identification of the *logos* of Greek philosophy with the incarnate Son of God had, according to Harnack, made it possible for Christianity to acquire a comprehensive intellectual outlook. By means of the ensuing mixture of Christian ideas with the political and economic doctrines of antiquity—which the church had declared, with whatever justification, to be simple and solid divine gold—medieval Catholicism had been able to extend at least a relative justification to the “world” of the biblical idiom, that is, the social reality of the state, war, law, force, and property. According to Troeltsch, the ethic of the Reformation

retains this whole design. It holds fast to the ideal of a Christian culture that is religiously and ecclesiastically directed and it is able also, on its part, to obtain the fulfillment of the Christian ethic with this-worldly conceptions of culture only by means of the self-evidently retained equation of *lex naturae* and *lex Christi*.²⁶

The ethic of the Reformation was also “a complete cultural idea.” The Reformation merely assumed that it had found “newer and better means” for realizing “a positive, universal, Christian formation of the world,”²⁷ though, as Troeltsch added, Luther himself had no real interest in such a cultural ideal, but rather still expected it to come about as a natural by-product of the preaching of the word of God. The Reformation did away with monasticism by obligating all Christians to practice asceticism in the midst of the world; it rejected the hierarchical and papal claims of world dominion by confining the church to the task of preaching the gospel and by expecting the officials of the state, insofar as they were Christians, to

assure voluntarily that all of society and culture be informed by the Christian faith.

Finally, it was clear to Troeltsch that the Reformation also retained—besides the ideal of a universal Christian civilization and the reception of the Stoic tradition of natural law—the basic ascetic attitude of medieval Catholicism, only that it was now given a different meaning. Following Max Weber, Troeltsch claimed that the Reformation replaced the “other-worldly asceticism” of medieval Catholicism, as it was typified by the monastic requirement to flee the world, by the “this-worldly asceticism” of the Protestant ethic, according to which all Christians were now expected “to overcome the world in the midst of the world.”²⁸ By intensifying the doctrine of original sin, the Reformation opposed the whole sphere of nature even more roughly than Catholicism had ever done. It did not recognize worldly goods as ethical ends in themselves, but only as means, in the midst of the world, to the achievement of the spiritual values of Christianity, which, by virtue of its supernaturalism, directed man, in both the Middle Ages and the Reformation, to look to heaven as his true abode and only goal.

(3) Troeltsch found it equally easy to show that the Catholic idea of the church, both in medieval Catholicism and in the Reformation, inescapably implied the ideal of the unity of church and state. A church which is believed to possess all salvation and all truth must seek to establish among all men “a uniform spiritual unity of life,”²⁹ and for the maintenance of that unity it must insist, if need be, on such coercion as only the strong arm of the state can provide. Only on the basis of the unity of church and state could medieval Catholicism have tried to realize its ideal of a universal Christian civilization and to implement its comprehensive cultural ethic. Again, the Reformation unquestioningly continued this whole medieval scheme by also conceiving of the church as possessing all salvation and the plain and absolute truth, by utilizing the coercive power of the state for the purpose of enforcing religious and cultural uniformity, and, in general, by subjecting the state to the spiritual interests of the church. Yet the Reformation did not succeed in embracing the whole church, nor did it retain the papacy as the unifying center of a universal civilization; hence, in the end, it led to the establishment of the territorial churches of Protestantism which Troeltsch considered to be merely so many copies, within a variety of smaller frames, of the medieval ideal of a complete, universal, ecclesiastical culture. No wonder that even the Catholic laws against heresy soon reappeared in

Protestantism. To be sure, Luther's Reformation, in contrast to medieval Catholicism, no longer required the uniformity of church polity and cultus, nor did it localize the saving power of Christianity in the hierarchical and sacramental church. It declared the word of God to be the church's sole foundation and substance. But it was now firmly believed that the word of God contained all salvation and all truth, brooked no opposition, did not admit of a variety of interpretations, and would in the end always and everywhere produce the same uniform results. It is also true that the establishment of Protestant state churches, in which the state actually soon came to dominate the church, was at variance with Luther's new understanding of the church as essentially a spiritual reality that was solely grounded in the word of God. But Luther was unable to set up his churches on the basis of this new understanding, so that at last he resorted to the state, grudgingly but most effectively, for help in organizing his followers. Naively confident that the word of God would ultimately prevail, distrustful of sinful human nature, he even left the organization of the unity of church and state, in obvious contrast to Calvin, to God's providence and the good will of the Christian princes and magistrates. If these princes and magistrates should show themselves selfish and indolent, Luther and his followers would comfort themselves with the thought of the Last Day, being content to retain for themselves the pure divine word from which all good would finally issue anyway. Troeltsch shrewdly observed that the continuing strength of the scholastic tradition over the biblicism of the Reformation as well as the tendency of these church establishments, whether Catholic or Protestant, to provide and enforce a uniform philosophical outlook, were exemplified by the fact that both confessions soon shared the philosophical foundation of Aristotelianism and Spanish neo-scholasticism. This is the more telling since, on the part of the Lutherans, it so obviously conflicted with the strictures that Luther's religious genius had placed upon the use of philosophy in all matters pertaining to the Christian faith.

(4) Finally, medieval Catholicism and the Reformation, in trying to maintain an authoritarian system of culture, shared also a similar doctrine of authority. Both agreed that the church was not an association of like-minded individuals for the furtherance of religious ends, but a divinely founded, supernatural institution, a divine miracle in history, and for a church so conceived they both needed a supernatural authority. Luther, however, as Troeltsch had already shown, saw the supernatural authority inherent in the church as

being localized in the word of God as found in the Bible, and not, as medieval Catholicism had seen it, in the institutional church itself. It is true that Luther had a freer and spiritually more discerning attitude toward the Bible than his fellow-reformers and followers. Nevertheless, he never doubted that the Bible was "an absolute miracle" and "an absolutely authoritative proclamation,"³⁰ divinely inspired, the organ, center, and foundation of the sphere of God's salvation in the world. Thus, Protestantism considered the word of God to be God's vicar on earth; it looked upon the Bible as the continuation of the divine-human Christ, even as Catholicism had declared the papal-sacramental church to be the extension of the divine incarnation. In the end it could be truly said of Protestantism that it "has solved the problem of infallibility sooner than Catholicism by formulating the proposition: *Breviter, quod illis est Papa, nobis est scriptura.*"³¹ The authority of Scripture was incredibly intensified in Protestantism, since everything was now made to rest upon the Bible. But it was also only natural that the divine, miraculous, and authoritative character attributed to the word of God was soon extended to include the confessional statements of the Protestant churches. Lutherans finally even developed the dogma of the *vocatio Lutheri*, which claimed divine inspiration and a relatively normative authority for Luther's own voice. In short, a strong spiritual authority enabled the church, whether medieval or Protestant, to function effectively as the creator and the unifying center of a complete, universal, Christian civilization.

What was the major conclusion that Troeltsch drew from his survey of the common features of medieval Catholicism and the Reformation? The Reformation, perhaps even more so than the Counter Reformation, had as its immediate effect "an enormous second bloom" of the Middle Ages that lasted for 200 years and sapped the strength from the shoots and buds of the secular culture that had already begun to emerge in Western Europe.³² The Reformation, on the one hand, was simply a movement that successfully reformed the late medieval church by exciting the depth of the religious life of medieval man to new heights of piety and fanaticism. As the knight and the monk had formed the focal points of the culturally unified early medieval world, so the fusion of the burgher and the Christian in the Reformation became again the center of a complete cultural circle of life. Viewed from this perspective, the late-medieval character of the Reformation was beyond question. Troeltsch could even assert that Luther's Reformation brought into

being three Middle Ages (Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist; Anglicanism he considered a variant of Calvinism), though, to be sure, the very fact of their existence and rivalry conflicted with the medieval principle of religious and ecclesiastical uniformity.

On the other hand, Troeltsch was by no means oblivious to the explosive new spirit that broke forth with Luther's Reformation. It is true that he tried to counter the wide-spread and, as he thought, ill-informed habit of tracing the modern world in lineal descent back to the Reformation by accentuating the medieval character of Luther's work, but he set forth no less clearly, though more briefly, the other side of Luther's work, its "dissolution of the medieval idea."³³ As we have seen, he was convinced that the interpenetration of medieval and modern elements, of "old" and "new" in the Reformation was the key to its nature and to its historical position as a transitional period in the history of Western culture. The "new," however, was limited to the religious sphere; moreover, it became a part of the foundation of modern culture only after the Enlightenment had entirely repudiated the medieval past, though Troeltsch acknowledged that the Reformation, by causing the loss of papal control over half of Europe, had also an immediately modernizing cultural effect. What, then, was the decisive point at which Luther broke with medieval Catholicism? It was his rejection of the Catholic sacramental system, his belief that the essence of religion did not consist in "sacred things and substances," but in "faith," by which he meant, according to Troeltsch, "a confident affirmation of a thought, of an idea about God which assures us of God's sin-forgiving grace and of his life-enhancing power."³⁴ The miraculous character of religion he retained, though it was no longer founded in the "sensuous miracle" of the sacrament, but in the psychological miracle of the sinner's ability to grasp firmly and confidently the thought of God's love toward him.³⁵ Drawing religion into the sphere of thought where it became understandable in purely psychological terms, Luther cut the heart out of the Catholic system by rejecting its sacramentalism. Hence, all the basic, properly religious ideas of the Reformation, of which Troeltsch named five, were essentially anti-Catholic; they manifested the nonmedieval, modern character of Luther's work.

(1) First, then, was Luther's concept of religion as faith, which replaced the Catholic sacramental understanding of religion, even though Luther retained two sacraments, now understood, however, to be no more than special modes under which the word of God is made manifest. Luther avoided mistaking faith for a volition of the human

will by asserting that faith is always the work of God within us. Hence the limited though crucial role that the doctrine of predestination came to play in Luther's theology. He also avoided confusing faith with the subjective fantasy of mysticism by insisting that faith is mediated to men only through the instrumentality of the biblical word of God and the historic church which is founded on and proclaims this word. Thus Luther emphasized both the inwardness of religion and its dependence upon the supernatural agency of the divine word. But by confining faith within the narrow boundaries of the biblical norm he was unable to perceive of the religious experience as a spontaneously, freely arising response of the individual consciousness to the divine. According to Troeltsch, it remained for Kant and Schleiermacher to draw the fully modern conclusions from Luther's new concept of religion as the confident affirmation of a thought about God.

(2) Implied in Luther's new understanding of the nature of religion was the nonmedieval, modern principle of religious individualism. Luther acknowledged only one religious authority as binding upon men: God, speaking through the conscience. But Troeltsch maintained that it was far from Luther's mind to try to dissolve the dogma of the church, for faith, even as Luther understood it, continued to be woven into the fabric of the dogmatic tradition of the historic church. Yet he initiated a new and more independent attitude toward the dogmas of the church. The individual was no longer expected to submit himself blindly to their authority, but to assent freely to them as he becomes convinced of their truth by their saving effect upon his life. This, according to Troeltsch, was the extent of Luther's opposition to the dogma of the church; it was also the extent to which Troeltsch was willing to agree with Harnack's controversial claim that Luther's Reformation was one of the terminal points in the history of dogma. But Luther's religious individualism was even more severely limited by his retention of the medieval notion of the uniformity of truth and by his belief that this truth was identical with the revealed truth of the Bible. The possibility of the unrestricted diversification of religious convictions and ecclesiastical organizations, though implied in Luther's religious individualism, was to be fully acknowledged and realized only in the modern world.

(3) Religion was for Luther not only the confident affirmation of a thought about God, i.e., "faith," but also an entirely new disposition which he believed to arise spontaneously from faith and which, in turn, motivates and regulates the entire Christian life. By tracing

the moral life in all of its manifold aspects back to a single source—the individual's disposition born out of his faith—he was able to establish a direct, psychologically transparent relationship between "faith" and "good works," religion and morality. Henceforth the Christian's conduct was no longer to be considered the sum-total of innumerable isolated "works" or deeds, but the consequence and effect of the inner disposition which embraced all of his life; it was solely in the light of this disposition that every one of his deeds would hereafter be judged. It could now even be said that the Christian had the law within himself, for in applying himself freely to the ever-changing circumstances of his life he was to be guided only by the promptings of the inner disposition, which, like faith, was but the work of God within him. No longer did he select and weigh his "works" with a view to the promise of divine rewards or the threat of divine punishments. Troeltsch went so far as to say that Luther cut, at least in principle, the fateful cord between ethics and eschatology by casting out the medieval belief in heaven, hell, and purgatory, which, above all, had fragmentized and externalized the Catholic ethic; for to Luther "salvation" was identical with the present certainty of faith and its fruit, the God-pleasing life, even as the sinner's present estrangement from God was already his "damnation." When Luther replaced the Catholic ethic of law and merit with the Protestant ethic of disposition, he gave an entirely new direction to ethical thought. On the other hand, he was far from espousing the modern principle of ethical autonomy. The freedom of the Christian from the letter and the law which he proclaimed did not imply freedom from the supernatural, divinely revealed law. He firmly believed that the Christian's will to do good would always coincide with the Decalogue; and the confessional, the use of casuistry, and even the hope of heaven and the fear of hell—though not the Catholic notion of purgatory—soon crept back into the Protestant ethic. Only Kant's classical formulation of Luther's ethic of disposition laid the foundation for a truly modern religious ethic.

(4) Luther's belief that faith issues in a new disposition that regulates all of man's conduct was bound to dissolve the medieval distinction between the secular and the religious spheres of life. Against the medieval gradations in the ideal of perfection, Luther insisted that the ethical demand was to be the same for all men; every man was now expected to serve God and to be perfect in one way only, by living the life of Christian faith and love in the midst of the world. This naturally led to Luther's new concept of "calling." He no longer

held the secular callings to be inferior to the religious callings of the church, as medieval Catholicism had done; rather, he considered every lawful calling to be the divinely ordained sphere in which each individual was to unfold his entire Christian life. Hence Luther's Reformation contained one other nonmedieval element: the Protestant affirmation of the world. But certain limitations again distinguished the Lutheran affirmation of the world from the secular outlook of modern times. Troeltsch had already shown that Luther's transformation of the "other-worldly asceticism" of medieval Catholicism into the "this-worldly asceticism" of the Protestant ethic by no means implied the recognition of independent secular values and goals; consequently, Luther could not at all conceive of man's calling as an end in itself. Moreover, Luther's ethic made no room for the fully individualized and spontaneous manifestations of the moral life in the face of the continuous flow of human affairs, with their ever-changing demands. He sincerely believed that God had ordained a stable system of social classes and callings which the Christian was to accept in humble submission to the divine will. In the end, the Lutheran affirmation of the world led generally to a mere tolerance of the world and fell far short of the modern ideal of the individual's independent, active, and full participation in the cultural and social life of man.

(5) Finally, Troeltsch thought that he was able to trace these four new elements in Luther's Reformation to a common source: Luther's unique concept of God. Luther was wrong in believing that he and his Catholic opponents shared the same concept of God, for having put his fellowmen on a different road to God, he was bound to direct them also to a different God. With a good deal of ingenuity Troeltsch labored to show that this fundamental change at the heart of Luther's theology manifested itself most clearly at the periphery of his dogmatic system in the two doctrines of the original state of man and of the natural knowledge of the law. Catholic theology had taught that even in the original state of creation man's "nature" (*imago Dei*) needed to be supplemented by the divine gift of a "supernature" (*similitudo Dei*) in order to enable man to attain to perfect communion with God. Further, Catholic theology had taught that the same duality of two substances, "nature" and "supernature," also existed somehow in God. Luther's obliteration of this distinction in his doctrine of man demonstrated his conviction that the capacity for perfect communion with God belongs to the very nature of man, though sin has caused its tragic perversion, and that God himself is a unitary

being, a divine person whose boundless love restores the sinner to that full and perfect fellowship with the divine Self which is already his by virtue of his created being. According to Troeltsch, at the heart of Luther's theology was a personalistic theism which even implied the modern belief in the immanence of the divine in man.

In a similar manner Troeltsch pointed to Luther's characterization of the natural knowledge of the law—which, since Paul, was believed to disclose the divine wrath over sin—as the self-deception of the rebellious sinner. The true divine law, which gives the power to fulfill what it demands, was revealed only in the gospel. Therefore, God is in truth nothing but grace and love, even where he confronts man as the divine judge, and man's redemption is but his ascent out of his self-deception to the true knowledge of the Christian God of love. Luther's concept of the law as the "alien work" of God was merely a mythical garb in which he clothed his profound insight into the unitary nature of the Christian God of love and of this God's relationship of love to man. Nevertheless, Luther was again prevented from fully unfolding his theistic concept of God by his adherence to the Catholic dogmatic tradition, in particular the dogmas of the Trinity, original sin, and the substitutionary death of Christ. In the end, the medieval duality of "nature" and "supernature" in the concept of God was merely replaced by the duality of law and gospel, God's wrath and God's love, which in its stark and unresolved contrasts became all-powerful in Protestant thought. Luther began but did not finish the work of developing a monistic theism. It was left to modern philosophy to complete this work.

We have now reached the point where we can not only briefly summarize the result of Troeltsch's studies in Luther's Reformation but can also indicate how these studies provided him with the key to understanding the history of Protestantism and Protestantism's place in the modern world. The Reformation was the organic outgrowth of the Middle Ages, but the modern world was by no means the organic, direct outgrowth of the Reformation, even though Luther's new religious ideas distinguished the Reformation from the Middle Ages as much as they showed its partial affinity to the emerging modern world. Protestantism at first remained at home in the unified, authoritarian, ecclesiastical culture of the Middle Ages. This culture was effectively destroyed only by the Enlightenment, when (1) the two powerful forces of the secular state and secular science emerged, forces which were untrammeled by ecclesiastical controls, and (2) there took shape the ideas of man's autonomy and of the

immanence of the divine in the world, ideas which Troeltsch considered the most potent culturally and the most characteristic of the modern age. Confronted by this enormous cultural transformation, Protestantism was also transformed. Consequently, Troeltsch found himself compelled to distinguish sharply between two Protestantisms, the classical Protestantism of the 16th and 17th centuries and the neo-Protestantism of modern times. He could now show why it was wrong to relate them to each other as stages in the progressive development of an ideal Protestant essence, as was the custom of most 19th-century German Protestants. For how was it possible to separate in Luther's Reformation the nonmedieval, modern elements—as the ideal essence—from the medieval features—as the temporary, accidental, expendable shell—when one was as much a part of the Reformation as the other? And was it not also true that Protestantism had been incapable of taking the initiative in discarding the "old" in Luther's Reformation in favor of the "new"? Rather, the "new" had come fully to the fore only under the pressure of new cultural forces to the shaping of which Protestantism had contributed little, e.g., the historical-critical method, a monistic metaphysic, an autonomous ethic, and the reconstruction of the political-social order. To Troeltsch it was beyond question that neo-Protestantism represented an irremediable break with the earlier classical form of Protestantism. From the vantage-point of this position he could now easily understand some of the most baffling features of modern Protestantism: the violent dissensions between its dogmatic tradition and the modern ideas, between its old organization and the new social tasks; the vacillation between attempts at preserving its orthodoxy to the point of petrification and at adjusting itself to the modern world to the point of self-annihilation, with a wide variety of compromises in between these two extremes; and the consequent loss of its earlier uniform appearance. In short, the mingling of "old" and "new" in Luther's Reformation helped to explain (1) the painful struggles that have come upon Protestantism as a result of its attempts to come to terms with the modern world, and (2) the relative ease and readiness with which Protestantism, in obvious contrast to Roman Catholicism, has tried to make itself at home in the modern world, as it had once been at home in the medieval world. Truly, these were exciting vistas across the vast panorama of the history of Protestantism and its changing cultural contexts which had been opened up for Troeltsch by his analysis of the dual, transitional character of Luther's Reformation.

One might be inclined to liken Troeltsch's essay of 1917, "Luther

and Protestantism," to the concluding coda of a symphonic masterpiece, for in this final contribution to the question of Luther's historical significance Troeltsch surprisingly maintained that Luther himself did not share in the transitional character of the Reformation—or, if he did, then only in a very limited sense. For Luther, especially the "young" Luther, was of universal human interest. He alone among the Reformers of his age extended into the timeless region of the universally human by virtue of the originality and depth of his primordial religious experience. In this experience—which Troeltsch found riveted to Luther's profound awareness of human sinfulness and to his radical desire for absolute salvation, neither of which would admit of any compromises—Luther probed the depth of the human soul in its desperate quest for the ultimate meaning of all human life, as grounded in the groundless freedom of God. In this respect, Luther was neither "medieval" nor "modern," but truly and universally human. Furthermore, from this same religious experience issued the all-pervasive dualism of Luther's thought and the paradoxical nature of his faith.

Now it could be seen why salvation was always to Luther the simultaneous assurance of God's grace and awareness of man's on-going, insurmountable sinfulness and selfishness. As Troeltsch put it:

The world outside of Christ and the world in Christ as well as God outside of Christ and God in Christ are complete opposites, which dissolve each other and yet only together make possible the experience of the blissfulness of grace in spite of the pain of sin.³⁶

It will not do to trace the dualism of Luther's thought to the influences of Occamism; rather, its root was ultimately to be found in Luther's extraordinarily complex personality itself. For Luther combined "the most sincere, childlike, powerful inwardness of trust in God and of a craving for perfection with an utterly sober, clear-sighted grasping of the world that was without any illusions."³⁷ In him were joined together rough matter-of-factness and enthusiastic exuberance; an overwhelming vitality, and the most tender of sentiments; sober acknowledgment of force, law, and order as the basic conditions for human life, and the most gentle compassion for the poor and downtrodden. He was both an idealist and a realist, without fissure or loss of integrity, though Troeltsch was led to distinguish rather carefully between the dominant spiritualistic idealism of the "young" Luther and the prevailing sober, even ill-tempered realism

of the "old" Luther, between the "days of his hope" and the "days of his resignation" in his career as a reformer of the church.³⁸

And yet, even here Troeltsch finally broke out into lamenting the fragmentation of Luther's deepest thoughts by his retention of the biblical doctrines, dogmas, and medieval concepts. As a prime example Troeltsch now offered Luther's treatise *De Servo Arbitrio*. Troeltsch celebrated this work as containing some of the most profound expressions of Luther's personalistic theism, surpassing in some respects even the theistic monism of Hegel's idealism, but he went on to state flatly that these thoughts were shot through by medieval scholastic notions, not to mention Luther's intimacy with the devil himself. And in a tone of resignation: "It is self-evident, one cannot think of Luther differently."³⁹ Thus Troeltsch concluded that Luther himself was already inwardly prepared to make the necessary descent from the height of his universal genius to the level of mediocrity on which the Protestant church, its transitional character firmly fixed, finally established itself. Indeed, the Protestant church establishment by no means reflected fully the genius of Luther's personality and thought, but by necessity it became the one great historic effect of his life.

It finally remains for me to add some brief remarks about Troeltsch's interpretation of Luther's Reformation which resulted from his trail-blazing sociological approach to the study of church history. Though it is true that *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches and Groups* presupposed and corroborated his earlier studies in the cultural significance of the Reformation, it nevertheless added some significant new features to his portrayal of Luther. The task which Troeltsch had set for himself was to analyze the sociological consequences of Luther's Reformation with a view toward ascertaining the historical and contemporary potency of the Lutheran social ethic, and the alternative with which he now confronted Luther was no longer that of "medieval" or "modern," but of "church" or "sect." It must here suffice to say that of the three possible sociological formations of the Christian idea—*church*, *sect*, and *mysticism*—between which Troeltsch had drawn his careful distinctions,⁴⁰ he found not only the "church" but also the "sect" to have been represented during the late Middle Ages. It will come as no surprise to hear Troeltsch insist that Luther's Reformation was essentially a continuation of that "church-type" Christianity which had

shaped the dominant character of medieval Catholicism. "Luther and the reformers, like Catholicism, comprehended the Christian idea in the schema of the concept of the church."⁴¹ "Sect-type" Christianity, which conceived of the church as an association of like-minded individuals whose lives were to be regulated rigorously and solely by the precepts of the Christian ethic of love, which resolutely renounced the world as evil, and which consequently remained limited to small numbers of dedicated adherents, was to come to the fore in Protestantism only apart from, or even in opposition to, the influences that in the end began to emanate from Luther's Reformation. Luther was, indeed, entitled to be called a Reformer of the Church, and Troeltsch went so far as to maintain:

Only as a Reformer of the church was Luther able to exert his great effect upon world history. Only the thought of supernatural universality led him also to universal and institutional results; without it Luther would have been merely a founder of a sect or order, or a lonely man like Sebastian Franck.⁴²

And yet, the very fact that Luther tried to reform and not to destroy the medieval church in the strength of his new religious ideas produced also what was, according to Troeltsch, the major characteristic of the Lutheran social ethic, its weakness and even impotence in the face of the ever-changing challenges of the political, social, and economic life of man. Luther, following the "church-type" way of thinking, developed, like medieval Catholicism, a comprehensive cultural ethic by retaining the Catholic identification of *lex naturae* and *lex Christi*; consequently, his ethic, like the ethic of medieval Catholicism, was a compromise between the radical Christian ethic of love and the ethic of the natural law with its regard for worldly goods, its respect for lawfully established authority, and its employment, wherever necessary, of compulsion and force. But having declared the same ethical demands to be binding upon all Christians, Luther was prevented from distributing the two standards of his ethic between the "religious" and the "secular" Christians, the monks and the laity, for their mutual supplementation, as medieval Catholicism had done; instead, he was forced to carry the dualism of his ethic into the life of every individual Christian. Hence Luther's distinction between a "private" and a "public" morality, between the morality of the "person" and the morality of the "office," in the light of both of which every Christian was now expected to regulate his life. Troeltsch believed he could show that Luther had limited the application of the radical Christian ethic of love to the private sphere of the Christian's

life, i.e., to his inner disposition and his person-to-person relationships, while the public sphere, where the Christian by virtue of his "office" or calling was a part of the processes and structures of society, was to be primarily regulated in the light of the directives that issued from the natural law. The soldier and the hangman, as long as they faithfully fulfilled their callings, were true Christians, even though, as Troeltsch put it, it was not quite so easy to think of them as executors of the Sermon on the Mount. Troeltsch was convinced that the secret of Luther's ability to sustain the antinomies of his ethical dualism was to be found in his doctrine of original sin, for this doctrine allowed him to conceive of the orders of society, with their characteristics of law and force, as positive and direct regulations of God for the containment of the destructive power of sin. Moreover, Luther believed that God had evolved the orders of society in the natural course of history, so that they were to be accepted in their dignity by every Christian in humble and obedient submissiveness, as divinely instituted ramparts against sin. Troeltsch, therefore, concluded that Luther's social ethic was based on

an extremely conservative, authoritarian understanding of the natural law and its historically developed manifestations. Here flowers the theory of the divine right of authority, the high respect which is due the officials and the police, and the short-sighted views of the common herd. The tender spiritualism of the properly religious idea is here given its counter-weight in the deification of the positive force which has arisen under God's permission and regulation.⁴³

Karl Holl called Troeltsch's further assertion that Luther glorified power for power's sake—thus to a certain degree resembling Machiavelli—"a tastelessness that indeed reminds one of Denifle" (Luther's polemical Roman Catholic critic).⁴⁴

Thus, Troeltsch finally became convinced that the two disjointed characteristics of Luther's social thought, (1) his spiritualistic idealism that was at bottom indifferent to the task of actively shaping the social reality and (2) his glorification of force, authority, and discipline, with its consequent submissive acceptance of the social *status quo*, helped to explain much of the history of German Lutheranism and even of Germany itself. Troeltsch held this Lutheran dichotomy accountable for the ease with which Lutheranism had always succumbed to the reigning political powers. Furthermore, it was obvious to him that Lutheranism was destined to become the backbone of the conservative party in 19th-century Prussia-Germany, which, in turn, did its best to keep Lutheran orthodoxy in power. Indeed, the true

heir of Luther's social thought was the brilliant theorist of Prussian conservatism, F. J. Stahl. For the Prussian conservatives shared Luther's anti-democratic instincts, his acknowledgment of the need for the masses to be led in a sinful world, his rejection of the right to revolt even against an unjust authority, his organization of society along the lines of sharply defined and strictly maintained class structures, his rejection of a system of free competition, and his aversion to every form of social experimentation in response to the challenges of changing conditions. In the end, Troeltsch was even inclined to believe that Luther's Reformation had helped to prepare the ground for the tragic chasm in the history of modern Germany, when Germany's political and cultural life was polarized into what has sometimes been referred to as "the spirit of Weimar" and "the spirit of Potsdam." The profundity, inwardness, and indifference to the social reality of Luther's spiritualistic idealism came to life again in the traditions of German idealism from Kant to Goethe, while Luther's authoritarian, patriarchal conservatism contributed its fair share to the rise of the political and military absolutism of Bismarck's Prussia-Germany. Heinrich Bornkamm has pointed out that most of the arguments with which in recent times Luther and Lutheranism have been blamed for the political malaise of modern Germany have been drawn from Troeltsch's studies in the sociological effects of Luther's Reformation,⁴⁵ so that even Hitler's ancestry has been traced to Luther himself. According to Troeltsch, Luther's social ethic was built around "an exceedingly coarse, crude, and aphoristic theory."⁴⁶ In its inherent weakness and impotence it was dwarfed in comparison with the two powerful systems of social doctrine which Christianity had so far been able to produce, the social ethics of medieval Catholicism and of "ascetic Protestantism" with its twin roots in Calvinism and "sect-type" Protestantism.

III

It is not my intention here to subject Troeltsch's richly colored portrayal of Luther and his Reformation to a critical and detailed analysis. I would merely like to add that subsequently a great deal was said not only about this portrayal but also against it. It was almost immediately recognized that most of the distinctive features of Troeltsch's studies in the Reformation were not as original as one might at first be inclined to think. Troeltsch himself pointed to the similarity between his and Harnack's conceptions of Luther's Refor-

mation when he expressed his general agreement with the "brilliant concluding chapter" of Harnack's *History of Dogma*, though he wanted it also to be understood that he had arrived independently at his own views.⁴⁷ Heinrich Bornkamm's statement is essentially correct when he says that Troeltsch absorbed and wove together most of the often divergent strands which had developed in the 19th-century interpretation of Luther.⁴⁸ Others have offered convenient surveys of the various sources from which Troeltsch drew in working out his classification of Luther with medieval Catholicism, his distinction between classical and neo-Protestantism, and, in general, his cultural-historical and sociological approaches to the study of the Reformation and church history.⁴⁹ Most critics have found particularly reprehensible Troeltsch's almost total neglect of the primary sources; in general he relied almost entirely on the secondary literature, which was no doubt a partial necessity for him when one considers his custom of opening up vast and panoramic vistas across the total sweep of history. Nevertheless, this particular method has made it easy for Troeltsch's opponents to take dead aim at the many inaccuracies in his presentation of details and then to jump to the conclusion that his total conception must also be wrong. Karl Holl, his most formidable opponent, tried to rescue Luther as much from Troeltsch's alleged misrepresentations as from the far more obvious distortions of the Catholic polemicists Grisar and Denifle by basing his studies on the most painstakingly thorough and accurate analysis of Luther's own writings and their various editions. Holl's essay, "The Reconstruction of Morality," must still be considered the most impressive counterpart to the sections on Luther in Troeltsch's *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches and Groups*.⁵⁰ He and other critics were, no doubt, correct when they accused Troeltsch of having failed to distinguish properly between Luther and the conservative church and state traditions in 19th-century Germany, of which he was so outspoken a critic.⁵¹ It has also been claimed that Troeltsch felt himself "spiritually distant" from the Reformation and that his classification of the Reformation with the Middle Ages was "an expression of the inner estrangement of Protestantism from its historical source."⁵² One might be inclined to agree with this statement, insofar as it is true that Troeltsch could have echoed the words of Richard Rothe, whom he greatly admired: "My theology is of a quite different datum than that of the reformers. This datum is not my individual one, but that of the modern age in general."⁵³ It might be said that Troeltsch's classification of Luther with medieval

Catholicism has generally found a less favorable critical response than (1) his assertion that the modern world began primarily with the Enlightenment, not the Reformation, and (2) his corresponding distinction between classical Protestantism and neo-Protestantism.

We owe one of the most perceptive characterizations of Troeltsch, both the scholar and the man, to his colleague and friend at the University of Berlin, the historian Friedrich Meinecke, many facets of whose characterization will now appear particularly applicable to Troeltsch's studies in Luther's Reformation. Meinecke called Troeltsch "prodigious in the flowing profusion of his thoughts which he poured out and shaped with incredible ease, and above all in the hunger of his restlessly and impetuously working, observing, combining, and constructing mind for ever new materials of the world and of life."⁵⁴ He alluded to the characteristic combination of eclecticism and originality in Troeltsch's scholarship when he spoke of the latter's ability to engage "in the mere reception of impressions which he pursued in enormous quantities," but from which he always somehow managed to emerge "vigorously and self-confidently with new productive ideas and discoveries."⁵⁵ The primary goal of all of Troeltsch's scholarly work was "to show his contemporaries, after he had guided them along the high paths of the past with a mountain-eering skill that often caused dizziness, whither the journey would and must now continue," though Meinecke added that

a certain incongruity existed between his positive guiding ideas and aims and the prodigious wealth of sublimated historical observations, so that his powerful speech often strangely broke down when at the conclusion of grandiose reproductions of foreign life and thought it was up to him to develop firmly, clearly, and unequivocally his own intentions and thoughts.⁶⁶

Indeed, Troeltsch's true greatness did not consist in his ability to lay the firm foundations on which the future could take shape but "to shake up the spirits to venture along new roads."⁵⁷ Early in his career Troeltsch once burst upon a conference of German theologians by beginning his response to the previous speaker: "Gentlemen, everything is tottering." Walther Köhler has seen in this characteristically startling and sweeping assertion the motto of Troeltsch's whole life and work.⁵⁸ The shattering impact of Troeltsch's interpretation of Luther was in his own time directed against the widely held "liberal" and "national" portrayals of Luther, which one may find conveniently and typically summarized in Ritschl's and Von Treitschke's orations in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the year of Luther's

birth.⁵⁹ Troeltsch, as we have seen, was not only opposed to all attempts at unduly and too facilely modernizing Luther, but he also extended a vigorous invitation to his fellow Germans to contemplate with him the possibility that Luther, or at least Lutheranism, was to be held responsible for much that was wrong in the life of modern Germany. In our own time Troeltsch can help to shatter our complacency by reminding us forcefully of the new tasks that lie ahead for Christianity. Here, once more, are his own words:

Great changes are in the air. But it is not the task of the historian to prophesy the future; it is the task of the will and of the conviction to shape it. Unbiased historical research can only give us for this work the insight into the fundamental difference between classical Protestantism and neo-Protestantism and therewith into the newness of the foundations on which the future will move on.⁶⁰

I have no quarrel with this attempt by Troeltsch himself to sum up some of the major results of his studies in the cultural significance of Luther's Reformation. I would merely like to express my conviction that Luther will be of greater importance in shaping the future even on the new foundations of the modern world than Troeltsch's own studies in the 16th-century Reformation and his own analysis of Christianity's place in the modern world had led him to believe.

N O T E S

¹ E. Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Schriften* (4 vols; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1912-25). The last volume, which includes a bibliography of Troeltsch's published writings, was edited by H. Baron and published posthumously. Hereafter referred to as *GS*.

² *GS* IV, p. 4. All translations from Troeltsch and from other German publications are my own. But other English translations of Troeltsch's writings, where available, will also be cited.

³ Three recent studies are attempts at doing justice to the totality of Troeltsch's work: W. Bodenstein, *Neige des Historismus*; *Ernst Troeltschs Entwicklungsgang* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1959); W. F. Kasch, *Die Sozialphilosophie von Ernst Troeltsch* ("Beiträge zur historischen Theologie," No. 34, ed. G. Ebeling; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1963); B. A. Reist, *Towards a Theology of Involvement; the Thought of Ernst Troeltsch* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966). As the titles of these studies already indicate, each author locates somewhat differently the central thrust of Troeltsch's lifework.

⁴ *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*, *GS*, I (1912). The English translation by O. Wyon, under the title *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (2 vols; first published 1931), is here cited in the Harper Torchbooks edition (New York: Harper, 1960).

⁵ Cf. *GS*, III, 369, n. 190; IV, 11.

⁶ *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* (Munich and Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1906; 2nd enlarged ed.,

1911). The 2nd edition, trans. W. Montgomery as *Protestantism and Progress; a Historical Study of the Relation of Protestantism to the Modern World* (first published in 1912), is here cited in the Beacon paperback edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958).

⁷ I would like to list here at least the following German works that contain discussions of Troeltsch's attempts to elucidate the true significance of Luther's Reformation (one should note, however, that these discussions vary considerably in their length and in the thoroughness and comprehensiveness with which they give coverage to Troeltsch's views): (1) W. Köhler, *Ernst Troeltsch* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1941), pp. 13-16; 240-57; 277-79. (2) H. Bornkamm, *Luther im Spiegel der deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1955), pp. 71-73. (3) W. Bodenstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 ff; 82-101; 109 ff. (4) W. von Loewenich, *Luther und der Neuprotestantismus* (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1963), pp. 130-40. (5) H. Fischer, "Luther und seine Reformation in der Sicht Ernst Troeltschs," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, V (1963), Nos 2/3, 132-72. (6) M. Wichelhaus, *Kirchengeschichtsschreibung und Soziologie im neunzehnten Jahrhundert und bei Ernst Troeltsch* ("Heidelberger Forschungen," Heft 9, H. Bornkamm *et al.*; Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Universitätsverlag, 1965), pp. 111-22, 177-94. Cf. also B. A. Reist, *op. cit.*, Chap. V, "The End of Christendom," which, as far as I know, is the only introduction to our topic available in English.

⁸ *Der junge Dilthey, ein Lebensbild in Briefen und Tagebüchern, 1855-1870* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1933), p. 81. L. von Ranke's "wie es eigentlich gewesen," which should always be pondered in its context, is found in the Preface to his *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker*, "Sämtliche Werke" (3rd ed.; Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1885) XXXIII, vii.

⁹ *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt*, 2nd ed., p. 6 (cf. *Protestantism and Progress*, p. 3).

¹⁰ Troeltsch, "Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit," in P. Hinneberg (ed.), *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, Part I, Section IV, 1 (2nd ed.; Berlin and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1909), p. 609. It is rather remarkable that after the turn of the 19th century this dark awareness of an imminent "anarchy of values" should have arisen in the minds of some of the century's most representative scholars: For Dilthey cf. "Rede zum 70. Geburstag" (1903), in Vol. V of *Gesammelte Schriften* (3rd ed.; Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), p. 9; for Weber cf. his discussion of the "warring gods" of modern culture in "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (New York; Oxford, 1958), pp. 147 ff.

¹¹ *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus*, 2nd ed., p. 102 (cf. *Protestantism and Progress*, p. 205).

¹² *GS*, IV, 7.

¹³ "Epochen und Typen der Sozialphilosophie des Christentums," *GS*, IV, 122-56. Other related studies in "Das christliche Naturrecht," *GS*, IV (1913), 156 ff; "Das stoisch-christliche Naturrecht und das moderne profane Naturrecht," (1911), 166 ff.

¹⁴ *GS*, IV, 205.

¹⁵ "Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit," in *op. cit.* (1906), pp. 253-458; 2nd enlarged ed. (1909), pp. 431-755.

¹⁶ "Luther, der Protestantismus und die moderne Welt," *GS*, IV, 202-53.

For the story of these texts and their editions cf. editor's introduction in *GS*, IV, xi ff. Additional shorter studies—except for *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus*—can all be found in *GS*, IV: "Das Verhältnis des Protestantismus zur Kultur" (1913), pp. 191 ff; "Calvinismus und Lutherismus" (1909), pp. 254 ff; "Renaissance und Reformation" (1913), pp. 261 ff.

¹⁷ "Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit," *op. cit.* (2nd ed.), p. 436. (A similar formulation in *Bedeutung des Protestantismus*, p. 32; cf. *Protestantism and Progress*, p. 59.)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 438.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 439.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 441.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 442.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *GS* IV, 156.

²⁶ "Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit," *op. cit.*, p. 443.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 442.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 453. ("In short, what the pope is to them, Scripture is to us.")

³² *Ibid.*, p. 454.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *GS* IV, 218.

³⁵ "Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit," *op. cit.*, p. 457.

³⁶ *GS*, IV, 241.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁴⁰ For Troeltsch's definition of the three sociological types of "Church," "Sect," and "Mysticism" cf. in particular *GS*, I, 967 (cf. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, II, p. 993) and *GS*, IV, 126 f.

⁴¹ *GS*, I, 452. Cf. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, II, 481.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 457. Cf. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, II, p. 484.

⁴³ *GS*, IV, 140.

⁴⁴ *GS*, I, 536 (cf. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, II, p. 532). K. Holl, *Luther*, Vol. I of "Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte" (7th ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1948), p. 255, n. 4.

⁴⁵ H. Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁴⁶ *GS*, IV, 162.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 216, n. 1.

⁴⁸ H. Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁴⁹ Cf., in particular, R. H. Grützmacher, "Die geistes- und theologiegeschichtliche Entwicklung des Problems: Alt- und Neuprotestantismus," *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, XXVI (1915) 715-914; K. Leese, *Der Protestantismus im Wandel der neueren Zeit; Texte und Charakteristiken* (Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 1941), pp. 157-278; M. Wichelhaus, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ K. Holl, "Der Neubau der Sittlichkeit," *op. cit.*, pp. 155-287.

⁵¹ For a sympathetic and more just assessment of the much maligned Prussian conservative tradition cf. H. J. Schoeps, *Das andere Preussen* (2nd ed.; Honnef/Rhein: H. Peters, 1957), which should always be supplemented, however, by W. O. Shanahan's critical study *German Protestants Face the Social Question* (Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1954).

⁵² H. Rückert, 'The Reformation—Medieval or Modern?' in R. Bultmann *et al.*, *Translating Theology into the Modern Age*, ed. R. Funk, *Journal for Theology and the Church*, II (New York: Harper, 1965) p. 6. Rückert's essay is a remarkable attempt to utilize Troeltsch's thought and go beyond it.

⁵³ R. Rothe, *Stille Stunden; Aphorismen* (Wittenberg: H. Koelling, 1877), p. 12.

⁵⁴ F. Meinecke, *Zur Theorie und Philosophie der Geschichte*, Vol. IV of *Werke*, ed. E. Kessel (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler, 1965), pp. 379 ff.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 367 f.

⁵⁷ F. Meinecke, *Erlebtes 1862-1919* (Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler, 1964), p. 259.

⁵⁸ W. Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Cf. the excerpts from H. von Treitschke, "Luther und die deutsche Nation" (1883), and A. Ritschl, "Festrede am 4. Säkulartag der Geburt Martin Luthers, 10. November 1883," in H. Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-84; 203-08.

⁶⁰ "Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit," *op. cit.*, p. 742.

PAUL TILLICH ON LUTHER

JAMES LUTHER ADAMS

IT IS peculiarly fitting that this volume of Luther studies in honor of Wilhelm Pauck should include an essay on Tillich's view of Luther, and that for two reasons. The first is that no writer of the twentieth century has been more successful and influential than Tillich in interpreting and disseminating the ideas of the great Reformer among the general public in the United States. The second reason is that Wilhelm Pauck and Paul Tillich were for more than thirty years in close association with each other as friends and colleagues. Indeed Wilhelm Pauck is the man who could give us the definitive essay on Tillich's view of Luther. As a Luther scholar—which I of course am not—Wilhelm Pauck has discussed with Tillich for decades all of the refinements and perversions as well as the main points of Luther exegesis.

Why then, I must ask, should anyone but Ulysses try to draw the bow of Ulysses? For my part I can only answer that I would do honor to Wilhelm Pauck; and, under the circumstances, I must take what comfort I can from Shakespeare's Aaron:

*What you cannot as you would achieve,
You must perforce accomplish as you may.*

* * * * *

To set forth Tillich's view of Luther presents a special problem. Unlike most of the interpreters of Luther treated in the present volume, Tillich approached Luther from the perspective of a systematic theologian. He was also a metaphysician, a philosopher of religion, a theologian of culture a religious socialist, a constructive writer on psychology, ethics, education, and art—and even on the system of the sciences. This means that he dealt with Luther within the context of a particular constructive position. The same thing may be said, to be sure, of any serious interpreter of Luther. But with Tillich, Luther's ideas are often evaluated and adopted largely in terms of a system of thought which is itself the major concern. An adequate treatment of his view of Luther, therefore, should be pre-

sented in the context of Tillich's own constructive outlook, and in such a way as to indicate the place of Luther in this system of thought. But that task is obviously not feasible here. I must be content, rather, with trying to set forth some of Tillich's characteristic expositions and interpretations of Luther, merely observing—*en route*, as it were—the ways in which Tillich's presentation bespeaks his “use” of Luther in the development of his own general position. Indeed, we shall find that an idea of Luther's is often expressed in Tillichian terms as well as in Luther's own formulations.

For some readers, even the restricted approach of the present essay can perhaps be instructive in a special way. It can show them, for example, that some of the ideas they have viewed as peculiarly Tillichian are, properly understood, an interpretation of, or a variant upon, ideas coming from Luther. This source of Tillich's thought has been widely overlooked. One can find lengthy expositions or interpretations of Tillich's thought which do not so much as mention its relation to Luther. These observations (obviously) should not be taken to mean that Tillich's outlook can be characterized as only Lutheran in provenance. Yet, they do give justification for centering attention upon his view of Luther.

Strictly speaking, Tillich was not a Luther scholar. He did not publish a single essay on Luther. But a number of his lectures on the Reformer have appeared in mimeographed form. In these transcribed lectures he does not cite the sources of his quotations from Luther, at least not in the English edition.¹ In his own published writings, however, his primary concern was not to give a rounded exposition and estimate of Luther's whole career and literary output or of his influence on Protestant and Western developments. His, instead, was an existential concern. Tillich from the outset was in search of a position for himself and his contemporaries. What he says about Luther, and what he does with Luther's ideas, is a part of his religious and intellectual biography. Tillich has been rightly called an autobiographical thinker. He was a Lutheran, a particular kind of Lutheran, and he brought to bear upon Luther's mind and piety his own unique scholarly and theological perceptiveness. Yet his Lutheranism was not a matter of filial piety, and certainly it was not a matter of filial obedience. He has some severely critical things to say about Luther. Moreover, for him Luther's ideas were often a point of departure, in the sense that he developed or expanded these ideas in new directions. Taking these considerations into account, we may say that the Luther presented by Tillich is a Tillichian Luther, recog-

nizing at the same time that the interpreter viewed himself as a Lutheran Tillich.

In his autobiographical sketch, *On the Boundary*, Tillich says, "The substance of my religion is and remains Lutheran." In summary fashion he then goes on to say, "It includes a consciousness of the 'corruption' of existence, a repudiation of every kind of social Utopia (including the metaphysics of progressivism), an awareness of the irrational and demonic nature of existence, an appreciation of the mystical element in religion, and a rejection of Puritanical legalism in private and corporate life. My philosophical thinking also expresses this unique content."² This statement of the elements of Lutheranism (ultimately to be traced to Luther) which were important for Tillich is by no means a complete account; and it could be misleading if it were accepted as definitive. It does not, for example, indicate adequately the more positive elements of Tillich's outlook as he associated them with Luther. Yet, it does bespeak his tendency to select for discussion the ideas of Luther which were of special concern to him. In this process he seldom resorted to polemics. Nor for that matter did he in his writings deal explicitly and systematically with the scholarly literature or with the polemical writings on Luther.

Even though one seldom finds in Tillich's writings a reference to the polemical literature—whether Roman Catholic, Protestant, or humanist—one must recognize that his interpretations of Luther reflect his vivid awareness of current distortions or misrepresentations of Luther's outlook and his own desire to correct them. But this is not the principal thing to be said here. Even the most cursory reader of Tillich will recognize that his intention was generally to make his thought and his formulations "kairotic," that is, relevant to the contemporary situation. Therefore, his emphasis with regard to elements in Luther's thought was often conditioned by his conception of the modern situation. When lecturing in the United States on Luther, for example, Tillich often asserted that his hearers, reared in a Calvinist or a sectarian ethos, were really ignorant with regard to Luther and that they sorely needed to take heed of him, in order to correct (for example) their characteristic moralism or their over-optimistic progressivism. On the other hand, he again and again pointed to characteristic insensitivities in Luther or in Lutheranism; and here he sometimes recognized the appeal of a Calvinist perspective, for example, with respect to institutional questions and to the social responsibilities of the church or of the individual.

Tillich's effort to make his presentation of Luther timely is of

course related to a dominant concern in all of his writings. Vividly aware of the incapacity of modern man to grasp, or to be grasped by, theological formulations from a previous age, Tillich made it a part of his own vocation to seek for new formulations, indeed for a new language, in order to give new forcefulness and relevance to old symbols. Indeed, he could turn Luther against the Lutherans at this point, viewing those who simply repeat the words of Luther (or of creed or of Scripture) as derelict in responsibility. A certain type of pastor, he often said, imagines that he has fulfilled his task of preaching the Word by merely repeating the words from holy writ or from Luther. Such a view, according to Tillich, represents a kind of legalism, a performance of pastoral duty by merely conforming to "the law" of preaching the traditional word, and then placing the blame upon a wicked and adulterous generation if the words are not heeded.³ This kind of legalism, he held, is accompanied by an ecstatic arrogance, an intoxicated renunciation of any attempt at effective communication.

It was precisely this kind of irresponsibility that Tillich wished to attack and overcome in his presentation of Luther. He viewed the contemporary man, and even the contemporary Protestant, as almost constitutionally incapable of understanding Luther's central conception, the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. As much among the educated as amid the working classes he observed a complete alienation from Luther.

In face of this situation he thought the work of Karl Holl and "the Luther renaissance" possessed considerable (if ambiguous) significance. Holl's Luther studies, he asserts in 1922 in a book review, "represent an event in Luther research, and indeed beyond that an event of significance for Protestantism's understanding of itself, especially of Lutheran Protestantism's understanding of its own origin and of the situation of its first breakthrough. Every word issues from the conviction of the imposing greatness of Luther, yet not a word is written down without the most solid basis in the sources."⁴ Holl, he says, combines two elements in a brilliant fashion, "the most intimate inward understanding and at the same time the most dispassionate method of research."⁵ This method aims to grasp a period or a personality from its own center, and is of high significance in its contrast with Roman Catholic apologetic treatment of scholasticism and with typical Lutheran polemics. "Equally important is the criticism that Holl directs against Weber and Troeltsch."⁶

Nevertheless, Tillich believed that Holl fell short of giving con-

temporary relevance to the ideas and piety of Luther. At a student conference in 1928 he said that Holl and "the Luther renaissance" possess "greater significance in their academic aspects than in their effect upon the contemporary religious situation."⁷ We shall return to consider this criticism in some detail later on. At the moment we should connect it with a more general consideration.

Tillich held that one of the major obstructions to the understanding of Luther has been a certain brand of Lutheranism. Lutherans universally have asserted that his greatness lies in the fact that, after the failure of others, he was able to break through "the Roman system." They have agreed that "the only man who really broke through, and whose breakthrough transformed the surface of the earth, was Martin Luther. That is his greatness."⁸ But Lutheranism has undergone transformations that obscure the proper understanding of Luther himself. Indeed, Tillich in this passage goes on to say, "Don't measure his greatness by comparing him with Lutheranism: that's something quite different, and is something which has gone through the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy and many other things—political movements, Prussian conservatism, and what not."

In the process of these transformations the Lutherans, he held, have blurred and distorted Luther's "Protestant vision." They have domesticated his revolutionary thrust, his breakthrough, in two or three principal ways. They have encapsulated the breakthrough by reducing it to a fixation or objectification in "pure doctrine." Along with this domestication they have been prone also merely to interiorize the breakthrough. Simultaneously, the breakthrough has become simply a conservative social force, a part of the established order of things. In all of these ways the breakthrough has lost its prophetic power. The term "justification by faith" readily makes the breakthrough susceptible to this reduction to a spatialized, merely inward-looking experience.⁹ Tillich therefore preferred the term "justification by grace through faith," for this formulation does not suggest the sort of subjectivism which has been the butt of Calvinist—and Barthian—as well as of Roman Catholic attacks.

In dealing with Luther's ideas (including the idea of justification) Tillich of course attempts to understand him in the sixteenth-century context, that is, in relation to the Roman Catholic sacramental and hierarchical system, and also in terms of the political and economic situation of the time. He gives some attention also to Luther's new conception of the Bible, to the way in which his central insights affected his doctrines of God, Christ, man and church, not only in the

face of Roman Catholicism but also in the face of Renaissance humanism. All of these conceptions are dealt with in such a way as to make them speak directly or indirectly to our contemporary situation, a situation fraught with special problems, doubts, and frustrations. We shall examine some of Tillich's formulations with regard to these aspects of Luther's outlook.

* * *

First, however, it will be instructive to notice the method of exposition and analysis by which Tillich often presents historical figures and symbols. Like any effective pedagogue he contrives a framework within which the figure or the idea may be viewed in a fresh light or perspective. Moreover, the framework is calculated to appeal more directly to the contemporary reader than a straight exposition would be able to do. We may take as an example the method employed by Tillich in an essay on "Protestantism as a Critical and Creative Principle" (an essay that was published in 1929 and which is not yet available in English).¹⁰ Here, and in later writings, he interprets the central ideas of Luther (and especially the doctrine of justification) in terms of a theological conception of criticism and of a theological conception of creativity. He employs this conceptual apparatus for the analysis of various movements in the history of Judaism and Christianity. It should be noted that the apparatus itself does not employ the vocabulary of Luther or of the tradition.

For Tillich there are two fundamental kinds of criticism: (1) immanent or rational criticism and (2) transcending or prophetic criticism. Rational criticism compares what a thing is with what it ought to be. As a criticism of intellectual and social structures it proceeds from the standpoint of immanent ideals by which particular forms may be measured. This type of criticism may identify and assess the character of a piece of furniture, of a play or a painting, or of a scientific method or thesis. In the realm of social-ethical behavior one may apply norms such as justice, health, power, wealth, creativity—ideals drawn from the finite order. All of these phenomena are relative goods, whether they be actualities or norms. They cannot lay claim to be the ultimate good, or answer the question as to the ultimate good. Yet the ideals can serve as a basis for rational criticism.

Prophetic criticism, on the other hand, proceeds from beyond all intellectual and social forms, from beyond existence and spirit, from beyond existence and freedom, and especially from beyond all the "works" of man. This ultimate good is beyond all actualities and all ideals; it is the ground and the abyss of every good. It creates them,

and it shows at the same time their relative and conditioned character. Prophetic criticism does not criticize reality in the name of an ideal. It criticizes the claim of any finite good to be the ultimate good. It rejects the claim of the good man or the good society or the good church or the good morality or the good science or the good political order to be the ultimate good. All of these can function as "law," and as such they can make absolute claims—claims for *themselves*. They reckon without their host. In face of such claims prophetic criticism expresses itself in the name of the divine majesty. No man can stand the unapproachable fire of the divine majesty. No human aspiration—though it be justice, beauty, or truth—can stand the divine light. Nor can the gulf between the divine and the human be bridged by any human power or activity.

Prophetic criticism has appeared three times with special power in the history of religion: in the Old Testament prophets (as against nationalism), in Paul (as against the moralistic claims of the religion of law), and in Luther (as against the Roman Catholic system of sacramental graces and hierarchical power). In all three instances the prophetic protest was against a sacramental system. (This of course does not mean that for either Luther or Tillich the sacramental element was properly to be derogated; in its reformed version it possesses its indispensable place and function.)

In these formulations we see Tillich's attempt to differentiate the two kinds of criticism. But he does not mean thereby to separate them. Old Testament prophetism, for example, brings the two types of criticism into close association, as do Paul and Luther. Prophetic criticism thus gives to rational criticism its radical seriousness, but at the same time imposes limits upon it. Rational criticism, on the other hand, gives horizontal relevance to the vertical dimension of prophetic criticism.

Tillich brings this whole discussion to a focus by showing how prophetic criticism, as here defined, achieves expression in the experience and doctrine of justification. For Tillich this doctrine is the characteristically Protestant way of bringing everything finite, including rational criticism, under judgment. Prophetic criticism by means of the experience of justification drives rational criticism "to its depth and its limit." The fundamental significance of the doctrine of justification in this context becomes clear in the following succinct summary which brings together formulations that have appeared in the earlier exposition of the two types of criticism.

Justification proceeds from what is beyond existence and spirit. It questions existence as such, and it refuses to take any account of the fact that "resistant" existence may achieve a partial approximation to true existence. Luther's struggle against the claim of reason to be able to grasp and realize truth on its own account, grew out of his conviction that truth (as conceived by him) transcends both existence and spirit. And his struggle against the claims of free will in connection with justification was based upon his conviction that justification transcends both spirit and freedom. It is absolutely erroneous to interpret Luther's struggle against reason as a fight against autonomy, and as perhaps a defense of heteronomy. His struggle, like that of all prophetic proclamation, was rather a denial of the self-sufficiency of autonomy; or, it was a protest against the confusion of spirit with what is beyond existence and spirit. And it is equally wrong to interpret Luther's struggle against free will as a denial of indeterminism and thus as perhaps a defense of determinism. His struggle, like that of all prophetic criticism, was a struggle against the confusing of freedom with what is beyond existence and freedom. The vehemence with which Luther carried on this whole struggle is the obverse of the danger that prophetic criticism (so effective in Luther's protest) may always be diluted into rational criticism.¹¹

We have now observed how Tillich uses the conceptions of prophetic and rational criticism to state for the modern man the doctrine of justification. He finds a number of other ways to give new meaning to the doctrine. Sometimes he presents the doctrine in terms of Luther's exegesis of the first two Commandments. Another way in which he states Luther's doctrine is by the adoption of the existentialist concept of the "boundary-situation." He uses this concept to expose the spurious search of the individual for security in terms of his own resources; he applies it also to the church's claim to have something securely in its possession. Both the individual and the church (and also the culture) must be driven to the "boundary-situation" where human possibility reaches its limit and where "every secular and religious domain is put in question."¹² The church in face of the boundary-situation must even give up its claim to "defend" the religious domain. Recognizing the unconditional demand which stands over man as man, and even his most revered institutions and accomplishments, Luther "stood in the depth of the boundary-situation and dared to reject all safeguards that piety and the church wished to extend to him."¹³ He remained in this boundary-situation, for in it he learned "that just this and only this is the situation in which the divine 'Yes' is not founded on any human achievement, it is an unconditional and free sovereign judgment from above human

possibilities.”¹⁴ In the boundary-situation every human “interest” is brought into question and crisis. Insofar as the modern man becomes radically skeptical of culture and civilization he is approaching the boundary-situation; in this situation, where he feels a radical threat to all of his “values,” he is amenable to the proclamation of the doctrine of justification.

Here we come upon one of the most striking insights of Tillich regarding Luther’s doctrine of justification. According to Tillich, the experience of the boundary-situation was for Luther a liberation from false gods, from false securities. Tillich sees here an anticipation of Marx’s concept of ideology. The Marxist term “ideology,” it will be recalled, refers to any ideas or cultural creations which through false consciousness serve to conceal rather than to reveal the social realities (especially the class conflict) and which in doing so support the special, hidden “interests” of the adherent. Religion for the Marxist is an ideology in this sense; relying upon a “false consciousness,” it serves the “ruling class.” Tillich suggests that Luther’s conception of the worship of false gods, a service of idols that express man’s will to power, points to an analogous concealment of the true human situation. Indeed, he asserts that the Marxist notion of ideology has deep roots in the Protestant-Christian judgment of man. “Human nature is corrupt,” he says in the manner of Luther, “and ambition and power enter even into the highest spiritual things. . . . Luther has expressly warned against the man-made god, the god of merely wishful thinking, an idol and a vain imagining.”¹⁵ In short, Luther is here setting forth a theological conception of ideology. In his day the struggle was against two ideologies, that is, “against two ways of concealing the true human situation, namely, the Catholic and the humanist ideology.”¹⁶ Theologically understood, these ideologies, in Luther’s view, are devices of escape from God.

But the recognition of prophetic criticism (or the experience of the boundary-situation) does not bring merely a forbidding “No.” It presents a releasing, promising “Yes.” Luther in the experience of justification discovers not only a critical but also a creative power. This is the paradox of justification. For Tillich the really decisive element in Luther’s indictment of the church is to be seen in his assertion that grace should supersede criticism. It is true, Tillich says, that “criticism always outweighed creation, yet Protestantism does not lack creative and formative principle; it cannot lack this principle any more than any other reality can. A form or Gestalt is the *prius* of crisis.”¹⁷

In explicating the creative element in the doctrine of justification Tillich makes a distinction that is analogous to the distinction between rational and prophetic criticism. There is a rational type of form-creation, but, like rational criticism, it will be driven to the boundary-situation. If creativity is to issue from the experience of justification, it cannot be simply a creation like any other in the finite order. It cannot be merely a rational form that has reached its highest perfection. Indeed, it cannot be anything objective, anything fixed or tangible. If it claimed simply to issue from the experience of justification, it would have to make the blasphemous claim to be exempt from criticism, and it would present the very situation against which Luther's doctrine of justification raises protest.

The form-creation that is appropriate as the outcome of the "Yes" of justification is, like the prophetic criticism, oriented to that which lies beyond existence and freedom; it cannot be "fixed" and identified as objective. And yet it exists, and as something existing it can be intuitively perceived. Grace is something present, but not something objective. "It is really present in objects, not as an object but as their transcendent meaning. . . . It symbolizes something that transcends existence and spirit, and yet something that is the real meaning, the real significance, of a concrete form."¹⁸ Thus reality can become the bearer of a meaning that unconditionally surpasses or transcends it. Wherever this meaning exists, we have a Gestalt of grace, that which supports and gives meaning to existence but not as an object. In his *Philosophy of Religion* (1925) Tillich speaks of this reality as the paradoxical immanence of the transcendent. At other times, he speaks of the finite bearers of transcendent meaning as symbolic or representative realities pointing beyond themselves to a transcendent source, thus remaining open to radical prophetic criticism. At other times he speaks of these concrete forms eschatologically, as standing not only under judgment but as "anticipating" fulfillment. Thus they are "broken," and can never properly be viewed as an object of possession. The Gestalt of grace, therefore, is the positive aspect of justification; at the same time it maintains the warning against false claims of security, against "work of righteousness." Faith is not a working of man; it is neither an intellectual nor a moral achievement, neither a sign of moral advance nor the acceptance of a doctrine. This view confirms "Luther's statement that faith is receiving and nothing but receiving."¹⁹

The fundamental thing in this whole discussion is the paradox of the divine Yes and the divine No. This No stands even over the doc-

trine of justification, and especially over the rationalistic doctrinal formulations that have issued from confessionalism and supernaturalism. Indeed, the idea of justification itself, viewed as a finite form, represents only one possible formulation. It has special limitations, particularly as set forth by Luther, but its virtue rests in its bringing together of the critical and the creative aspects of the divine-human encounter and in its emphasis upon grace received through the response of faith. And faith is not a working of man; it is neither an intellectual nor a moral achievement, neither the intellectual acceptance of a doctrine nor a sign of moral advance. It is a gift of grace.

In the idea of justification Tillich finds the basis for his conception of "the Protestant principle, the critical and dynamic source of all Protestant realization."²⁰ In speaking of this principle as being derived from the doctrine of justification he offers a summary statement when he says that the principle "rejects heteronomy . . . as well as self-complacent autonomy. It demands a self-transcending autonomy, or theonomy."²¹

The positive consequences flowing from the Reformation (and the experience of justification) are delineated by Tillich in a great variety of ways: in the new attitude toward the Scripture, in the new forces working within the church, in the laicizing of the monastic ideal, in the emergence of the heroic, ethical personality. In Tillich's view (as we shall see) these consequences result largely from Luther's ability to combine prophetic and rational criticism. Before dealing, however, with this aspect of his treatment of Luther, which is very important for Tillich's view of him, we should observe that Tillich refers to or expounds many facets of Luther's doctrine of justification not even hinted at so far.

A substantial anthology could be assembled to bring together these expositions and interpretations. We should mention here, for example, the many aspects of Luther's understanding of the nature of faith (in its relation to justification) with which Tillich deals. For reasons of space let me mention these seriatim. Faith, not love, occupies the center of Luther's thought.²² Faith is "receiving and nothing but receiving";²³ it is a channel and not a cause.²⁴ It is to be distinguished from historical faith (*fides historica*), the acknowledgement of historical facts.²⁵ It brings forgiveness and new beginnings.²⁶ It engenders confidence that the unacceptable is accepted.²⁷ It accepts the unjust man as just, and transforms him in terms of anticipation.²⁸ It creates personal courage in the face of temptation, anxiety, and despair.²⁹ It brings participation in a divine reality, the ultimate center,

which is the ground of the person and of the good and the true.³⁰ It gives rise to the transmoral conscience (the joyful conscience) which in turn establishes morality from a point above morality.³¹ It brings victory over law, guilt, and death.³² In short, faith is the accepting of the power itself out of which we come and to which we go.³³ Tillich develops some of these ideas at great length, even at book length, as in *The Dynamics of Faith* and *The Courage To Be*. An analysis of these ideas as set forth by Tillich, and in precise comparison and contrast with those of Luther, deserves a study by itself. Indeed, this sort of analysis (alone in connection with the theory and practice of therapy) will provide material for reflection and application for some time to come.

We should now stress something that could have been said earlier but which can now be said with greater plausibility and with greater concreteness of reference. The reader will have observed that in Tillich's exposition of Luther little, if anything, is made of Luther's own formulation of the crucial issue. Luther was plagued by the question, "How do I find a merciful God?"

Tillich, reflecting upon contemporary man's alienation from Luther, early came to the conclusion that the question Luther posed is not a live issue today. Yet, under the influence of his teacher Martin Kähler in Halle, he had been persuaded of the decisive, embracing significance of the doctrine of justification. Indeed, he was convinced that a proclamation of justification like that which effected a breakthrough in the Reformation period cannot have religious significance today unless it can effect a new breakthrough in a new way, one that is relevant for our time. But where and how would this be possible?

Tillich observed that modern man, whether he be "religious" and churchgoing or completely secular, is not troubled by any divine demand for righteousness or by any search for a merciful God. What drives him to the boundary-situation is a quite different demand, a demand for meaning. In fact, the sense of the loss of meaning gives contemporary man an acute anxiety and something of that sense of hopelessness which Luther experienced. Here, then, is a place for the breakthrough. The idea of justification must be related to the sense of meaninglessness or emptiness which has become acutely pressing in a flattened-out, empty, autonomous culture in a later phase of capitalism.

In this connection we should give special attention to two ways in which Tillich attempted to give Luther's doctrine of justification a hearing within the context of our present situation.

First of all, he confronts the sense of meaninglessness as it appears in the alienation from Christian tradition, and precisely at this point Tillich identifies an opening to meaning and to justification. Here he goes beyond Luther in a striking way.

From Tillich's point of view, contemporary man is alienated from a Christian perception of the human situation and he cannot hear the word of the gospel because he cannot accept what calls itself Christian belief. He cannot understand the nature of faith because (under spuriously "Christian" influence) he identifies faith with certain beliefs that have been formulated in the vocabulary of another period. In the face of these "beliefs" he is simply an unbeliever. The demand that he identify faith with the acceptance of doctrine leads him to assume that faith is merely the attempt to believe something incredible. Believing the unbelievable appears to be demanded as a work of piety. In short, faith comes to be identified with the repression of doubt. Over against this kind of "piety" Tillich sees a positive religious significance in doubt itself. Here he goes beyond Luther. Whereas Luther had interpreted the experience of justification as a religious-moral experience associated with the search for a righteous but merciful God, Tillich asserts that the experience can occur also in the religious-intellectual sphere—for the doubter as well as for the "sinner." Precisely when the unbeliever is seriously concerned to maintain intellectual integrity to the point of radical doubt, divine grace is present. It is present in the experience of doubt, for it engenders participation in a liberating reality. Doubt can be the reception of meaning in the very midst of meaninglessness. Thus the doubter is "justified." His doubting is a participation in truth.³⁴ (Here one is reminded of Augustine's insight, "I doubt, therefore I am.")

Tillich's extension of the idea of justification to the religious-intellectual sphere is related to a second adaptation of Luther's thought. Although Luther never made this extension explicitly, there were other ways, according to Tillich, in which he gave serious attention to rational criticism. Here, in effect, Tillich rejects those interpreters, both friendly and hostile, who have presented Luther as fundamentally irrational or antirational. Indeed, in Tillich's view, Luther's "far-reaching historical influence" could be attributed in part to the fact that his thought bore "an integral relation to all the significant forms of rational criticism of the age."³⁵ He was in close touch with the work of the humanists. He was "unprejudiced enough to use even his own nominalist learning and Melanchthon's humanist

education for the formulation of theological doctrines, though he was not conscious enough of the problem of the 'situation' to avoid falling into orthodox attitudes."³⁶

We have already observed the criterion by which Tillich formed his judgment regarding Luther. He held that "only a courageous participation in the 'situation,' that is, in all the various cultural forms that express man's interpretation of his existence,"³⁷ can avoid deterioration into orthodox fixations. He lamented the fact that contemporary neo-Protestant theology in its early phase was in the process of progressively destroying the integral relation between prophetic and rational criticism. "The picture of Luther which comes from this neo-Protestant group," says Tillich, "depicts him as entirely cut off from all relationship with the rational criticism of the historical forces of the time."³⁸ He cites Gogarten as typical of this view. Here Tillich sees a contrast with the "Holl School."

The conception of Luther set forth by the latter school is, in his view, far superior to that of the neo-Protestants. Holl himself, for example, dealt with the rational criticism to be found in Luther's work. But, like the neo-Protestant group, the "Holl School also fails to take advantage of the opportunity to influence our period." This brings Tillich to his central criticism of the Holl School.

Its message is rendered quite ineffective by the fact that it applies directly and immediately to the present those [historically conditioned] forms of rational criticism contained in Luther's prophetic word, instead of making them burst forth anew out of the depths of the present—out of the Kairos.³⁹

Here the Holl School fails to bring the ideas of Luther to life in our time. In Tillich's view, this is the explanation of the fact that with few exceptions the interpretations of Luther offered by this school in Germany have presented him in an unfavorable light.

The key phrase in the criticism of the Holl School is contained in the statement that the rational forms should have given a powerful theonomic reference that would "make them burst forth anew out of the depths of the present—out of the Kairos."

What Tillich had in mind becomes very explicit if we examine his writings of the time on religious socialism. It must suffice to indicate the radical character of his conception of prophetic and rational criticism if we recall a famous passage from an essay published three years before the one we have been citing:

In the nineteenth century the prophetic spirit broke forth in two places, and each time it was under the banner of a conflict with

Christianity: in Karl Marx and in Friedrich Nietzsche. In Marx we find by word and deed the spirit of the old Jewish prophecy, and in Nietzsche the spirit of Luther. Although this battle, in the one case for justice and in the other for the creative life, took its form as a drive against God, it was an attack upon a God who had been bound to a standpoint, i.e., of bourgeois society.⁴⁰

Here Tillich speaks in the spirit of Christoph Blumhardt the Younger and of Kutter and Ragaz. This aspect of Tillich's writings assumes a special significance today for both the Lutheran-Roman Catholic discussion of Luther and the Christian-Marxist dialogue. It is not surprising that with respect to the latter dialogue (under the aegis of the World Council of Churches) the writings of Tillich like those of Leonhard

If we observe no doctrine of the man specifically what he lowers" for simply idealism, thus failing to of the present."

Protestantism must stand against its own. It must hide. It must show the interest of the free part; how the idealistic patriarchal order, with how the idealistic interest of a victorious—religiously speaking

This contrast between "false consciousness," doctrine of justification and a doctrine of man.

Tillich's internality & existentialist tendency in the continuity of the medieval tradition of mysticism - (German) - in. Rom. Objectivism - L. in divine Presence - transcendental the cleavage of sub/obj & Head/

* * *

We must now examine Tillich's interpretation of Luther's total outlook as a theologian. Here again we must observe that, by and large, the aspects of Luther's thought which engaged Tillich's attention were those that related to motifs characteristic of his own outlook. The question immediately arises: Why was this so? There are two possible answers: either (1) that Tillich's primary concern was not to present a complete picture of Luther but to develop his own position; or (2) that certain aspects of Luther's thought attracted Tillich's attention because these were the avenues by which Luther influenced him, i.e., by which Luther shaped Tillich's con-

tructive conception of Protestantism. Actually, these answers are two sides of the same coin. But the coinage that comes from the Tillich mint is in many ways a new coinage, reminiscent of neoplatonism and of German classical philosophy.⁴² He held that these two dimensions in Luther's thought converged in an idea of God which is so overwhelmingly powerful that it is hard to mediate its meaning today, even to theological students."⁴³ But he thought that "if this God can be rediscovered, then we will have something like a new Reformation, but which will look entirely different from the earlier Reformation."⁴⁴ He candidly goes on to indicate that the rediscovery, in his view, will entail the adoption of his own conception of God—"the God beyond God."

We cannot apply the great and powerful words of Luther and Calvin directly to our situation; but we can interpret them—what it really was that drove these men. And I think that what should drive us today, too, is the search for the God who is beyond what we usually call "God," the God who is a ground below all the special beings, including a God who is a special being.⁴⁵

Tillich, as we already hinted, viewed the mystical element in Luther as standing in continuity with the medieval tradition of mysticism. Repeatedly in his exposition of the mystics—Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure, for example—he speaks of their anticipating Luther. Luther's intense personal experience, the inwardness of his experience in contrast to the "objectivism" of the Roman sacramental system, reflects the influence exerted upon him by devotional literature stemming from late-medieval German mysticism. This mystical element appears also in Luther's sense of the divine Presence, which transcends the cleavage between subject and object in the finite order, thus overcoming any dualism between heaven and earth. In this connection Tillich was fond of quoting Luther's words:

Nothing is so small but that God is even smaller; nothing is so large but that God is even larger. He is an ineffable Being, above and outside everything we can name or imagine. . . . God is nearer to all his creatures than they are to themselves. He has found the way for his own divine essence to be completely in all creatures, and in man especially, in a deeper and more internal and more present manner than the creature is to itself. Thus he embraces all things and is within them; and at the same time he is nowhere, he cannot be comprehended by anyone.⁴⁶

In introducing this quotation Tillich says that Luther "denies that God is something like an object beside other objects—a thing, a person. God is the driving power of being in everything that is.

He is the ground and the power of being. . . . We can say, in modern terms, that in these formulas Luther overcomes the cleavage between the pantheistic and theistic elements—indeed, he has said that himself.” These formulations indicate, however, that Tillich does not view the mystical element as decisive for Luther. Nor, for the matter, did he consider it to be decisive for himself. He says explicitly, “I am not a mystical theologian.”⁴⁷ The danger of mysticism is that it can become “subjective,” thus failing to recognize the grace that comes from “above” or “outside.” Luther was fully aware of this danger: he wished always to “magnify” God’s majesty and grace.

The general framework of Tillich’s thought was connected much more with his appreciation of the voluntarist tradition; and it was primarily in terms of this perspective that he interpreted Luther. At the same time, we must add, he saw close affinities in Luther between the mystical and the voluntarist elements. What is meant by this term *voluntarism*? The tradition stems from Augustine and “runs from Duns Scotus and the nature philosophy of the Renaissance down through Luther and Jacob Boehme to Oetinger and Schelling,”⁴⁸ continuing on through Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to the modern existentialists and pragmatists.

Voluntarism is a type of thought for which the Will, a psychological category, is the root metaphor. This concept, as employed by Tillich, aims to be “non-objectivating”—it does not transform God or man into things—but at the same time it aims to avoid being merely “subjective.” The “psychological” metaphor, then, possesses a non-psychological connotation.⁴⁹ These criteria of the concept of the Will apply to the doctrine of man as well as to theology and metaphysics. This voluntarist line of thought stands in contrast to the intellectualist line that goes back through Descartes to Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle. For Tillich (and for his interpretation of Luther) the voluntarist perspective brings to the fore these characteristic motifs: “the ambiguous character of existence, the irrational will that destroys any static conception of the world of ideas, the conflict of the unconscious and the conscious will, the demonic depth in the divine nature itself.”⁵⁰

One of Tillich’s most frequently recurring characterizations of Luther’s doctrine of God is the emphasis upon God’s dynamic activity. God is sheer will, ever free to do what he wants.⁵¹ His power is absolute.⁵² He is omnipotent and omniactive. Tillich quotes Luther frequently in this vein:

"I call the omnipotence of God not that power by which he does not make many things he could make, but the actual power by which powerfully he makes everything in everything. . . . God acts in everything and through everything."⁵³

This continuous activity is God's providence. Thus Luther rejects the traditional doctrine of omnipotence in favor of this omniactive dynamism. Tillich identifies this emphasis as voluntaristic. Luther sometimes places the stress upon sheer will without any reservation. "God is heroic and without rule. God is he for whose will there is no reason or cause, for he does not will something because it is good, but conversely, it is good because he wills it."⁵⁴ This is Luther's conception of the "naked absolute."

In interpreting such passages Tillich says, of course, that Luther was influenced at this point by nominalism. But he adds that Luther was "not really dependent on it." As Tillich sees it, Luther was "himself a voluntarist and had in himself much of the Dionysian awareness of the underground of life in man." He also had insight into the demonic forces in the world and in man.⁵⁵ This Dionysian perception on the part of Luther led him to emphasize the dynamic character of God in such a way as to prevent every fixation. "Nothing is safe." Thus, for Luther, God is continuing activity. Luther aimed to "transform the static God of the *actus purus* into the living God."⁵⁶

In this connection Tillich credits Holl with having corrected Ritschlianism with its moralistically reduced conception of God. Holl rediscovered that Luther's God is the hidden God, the unknown God, the God in whom is rooted the darkness of life as well as its light. "This view of Luther's theology showed the tremendous inner force in the great revolutionary."⁵⁷ One should add here that Tillich's emphasis upon this aspect of Luther's theology bespeaks the fact that he, like Luther, "had in himself much of the Dionysian awareness."

Drawing upon Scholastic formulations, however, Luther distinguished between the absolute power (*potentia absoluta*) and the ordered power (*potentia ordinata*) of God.⁵⁸ Behind the ordered power of God, which is to be observed in the structured world process, lies his absolute power. By virtue of his ordered power, however, God has conceded to give some rules and thus to provide self-identity and continuity;⁵⁹ yet there is no absolute safety in either the moral or the ecclesiastical rules. For Luther, says Tillich, "God's absolute power is like a threat behind these ordering rules, like an

abyss in which they may be swallowed up at any moment. We do not know exactly what the will of God ultimately is."⁶⁰ Every reader of Tillich will recognize here his characteristic formulation, "the ground and abyss," a formulation that is the coinage of Jacob Boehme, the Lutheran voluntaristic mystic.

This hidden God is experienced by Luther in a special way. God as we have observed already in Luther's doctrine of justification, is beyond all human possibilities (moral, intellectual, or religious). His acting transcends everything human—all human expectations. Therefore, one must always speak of God paradoxically.

Wilhelm Pauck has observed that Luther in his *Lectures on Romans* (1515-16) had already "thought about everything in terms of contrast."⁶¹ Tillich speaks of this method as the principle of contrast or paradox in Luther's theology. He compares this principle to Nicholas of Cusa's conception of *coincidentia oppositorum*. The contrasts that articulate this conception cover a wide range for Luther: the hidden and the revealed God, darkness and light, the love and the wrath of God, God's proper work and his strange work, his absolute power and his weakness, God's absolute distance from man and at the same time his nearness.

Tillich for his part makes this principle determinative for Protestant theology. Just as for him the doctrine of justification is the basis of "the Protestant principle," so he finds the principle of contrast or paradox characteristic for Protestant thinking—"in Kierkegaard, in Barth, and in Protestant theology wherever you look."⁶²

It is in terms of this principle of paradox or contrast that Luther develops his interpretation of nature and history. "The creatures," Luther says, "are so to speak the masks of God. God makes them work and help him." All natural orders and institutions are filled with the divine presence, and so is the historical process. The great men are also the masks of God. The Goths, the Vandals, and the Turks "are driven by him to attack and to destroy; and in this sense he speaks to us through them. They are God's word, although they destroy."⁶³ Indeed, God uses his wrath permanently in order to actualize his love.⁶⁴ This means, nevertheless, that God acts even in Satan. How could he do otherwise? Satan could not have being without God, who is the power of being in everything.⁶⁵ It should be noted here that Tillich criticizes Luther for not having seen clearly enough that "love's strange work [a doctrine of compulsion] can be used by those in power. . . . Therefore he has often been accused of a Machiavellian cynicism with respect to power." This

view, Tillich says, "is certainly wrong, subjectively speaking. But it is not completely wrong with respect to the consequences of Luther's doctrine."⁶⁶

This ambiguity in the divine-human relationship in the arena of history would seem to make it extremely difficult to interpret the signs of the times, and particularly so in terms of Luther's conception of the "masks of God." Luther himself, in somewhat resigned fashion, waits for the appearance of the hero who is armed by God and who breaks the ordinary rules of life. But, according to Tillich, the conventional doctrine of God confronts a much more acute problem. The conventional doctrine makes a simple distinction between good and evil. In the intellectualist tradition the doctrine of God is bound up with a rationalistic and dualistic philosophy which tries to promote "the monotheism of pure form"—social reality is either viewed as something to be gradually subjected to rational improvement under religious auspices or it is viewed as of no religious significance and is thus ignored (or accepted with resignation). The first attitude leads to a kind of Utopianism, often of a very weak sort. Since it knows nothing of social demonries, it eventually suffers disappointment when these break forth destructively. The second attitude sees evidences of the will-to-power in society but does not recognize them as demonic; it fails to see their religious significance in its search for resolution "in the beyond." Both of the above attitudes are completely untenable. The first will simply decay and fade away before the demonic forces, may in fact find ways to "collaborate" with them. The second attitude merely succumbs.

But a recognition of the religious significance of the social demonries would preclude any religious indifference to them and, what is more, would render it impossible to give them religious sanction. The conventional doctrine held by the intellectualist tradition, stemming as it does from Aristotle, was long ago found wanting, particularly by the mystics—from Plotinus to Eckhart. But these mystics remained bound to the dualistic thinking of their static, rationalist doctrine.⁶⁷

Luther for his part recovered the *tremendum* and *fascinosum* of the divine majesty, glorifying this majesty, giving it depth and mystery, restoring the sense of its numinous quality. One aspect of this renewed vision of the living God is to be seen in "the demonic elements in his doctrine of God, his occasional identification of the wrath with Satan, the half-divine, half-demonic picture he gives

of God's acting in nature and history." All of this constitutes "the greatness of Luther's understanding of the holy."⁶⁸ But it points also to the danger in his understanding—that it is "not safeguarded against demonic distortion and against the resurgence of the unclean within the holy." Thus Lutheranism was not immune to the temptations of Naziism.

Tillich's concept of the demonic presupposes this background, the duality or paradox and the dynamism in Luther's conception of God. He says, however, that he could not have developed the concept "without the groundwork laid by Lutheran mysticism and philosophical irrationalism."⁶⁹ Taking his cue from Boehme and Schelling, Tillich by several stages developed Luther's dialectical view into a conception of the creative and destructive powers of the demonic. This conception, like that of Luther, presupposes that obsession or possession at the hands of demonic powers can be overcome only through grace.

Tillich points out that this view of Luther does not mean philosophical determinism. "When God works in us, the will is changed by the Spirit of God so that it desires and asks not from compulsion, but responsively and readily." With this paradoxical presupposition Luther asserts that the human will is like a beast of burden between God and Satan. "If God sits thereon, it wills and goes where God wills; if Satan sits thereon, it wills and goes as Satan wills. Nor is it in the power of its own will to choose for which rider it will run; but the riders contend which shall have and hold it."⁷⁰ In this paradoxical fashion, says Tillich, Luther gives a picture of the divine-demonic struggle in the soul of every human being and in history. It is a picture that rules out the notion that each individual is separated from every other individual, morally autonomous and making decisions for good and evil. In short, Tillich through this understanding of Luther underlines the contrast between what he calls "the prophetic tradition" and the outlook of moralistic humanism (secular or theological).⁷¹ In terms of this distinction, Tillich repeatedly refers to Luther's critique of Erasmus,⁷² attempting to show how Luther sought a way between Manichaeism and Pelagianism.⁷³

This brings us to Tillich's presentation of Luther's doctrine of man. Here we are concerned with what Tillich calls the essential man and the existential man. It is somewhat surprising to observe that Tillich seldom refers to Luther's treatment of the former. To be sure, he deals briefly with the differences between Luther and

the Scholastics as touching man's created goodness "before the Fall" and man as bearer of the image of God. He does recognize also that, according to Luther, man is essentially free in the sense of possessing psychological freedom. But he gives little attention to Luther's doctrine of original creation.⁷⁴ Instead, he emphasizes Luther's view that man is estranged from God and that he cannot of his own will turn to God: his will is enslaved, though it is the free will that is bound. It is enslaved by demonic forces. But man cannot help God effect the change that is necessary for salvation, since it can come only through grace, the grace that gives justification through faith. Man cannot even know his estrangement, his sin, except through communion with God.

For Luther, then, the real sin is the refusal of the gift of God—unbelief or "unfaith": "Unbelief is the very essence of sin." Tillich holds that this word is "one of the most revolutionary words which has ever been said." It means that separation from God is sin. This means that there are no degrees of sin or of approximation to the divine. Each and every thing that separates man from God is of equal weight. In order to epitomize what separates man from God, Tillich refers to the Augsburg Confession, which defines sin as the state of man in which he is "without faith in God and with concupiscence." To these two, unfaith and concupiscence, Tillich adds *hybris*, "the spiritual sin of pride which, according to Augustine and Luther, precedes the so-called sensual sin."⁷⁵ Tillich holds that all three of these marks of estrangement require reinterpretation. In offering these reinterpretations he rejects the traditional doctrine of "original sin," precisely in order to preserve Luther's intention to combine "individual responsibility with tragic universality."⁷⁶ He expresses surprise that Luther should have retained the spurious notion of Augustine that concupiscence is to be identified with sexual desire. He broadens Luther's definition to include *libido sentiendi*, *libido dominandi*, and *libido sciendi*. All of these "sins" point to Luther's basic intention to characterize the sin of concupiscence as the direction of the will of man toward himself.⁷⁷

Tillich also points out that both the will of man toward himself and the turning to God (through grace) involve the whole man—soul and body, spirit and flesh. Luther struggles against a dualistic anthropology. Moreover, the turning to God, although a gift of grace, is voluntary. Man's own will turns "in freedom and with joy."⁷⁸ This turning toward communion with God is a transmoral, ecstatic experience, for sin is a religious not a moralistic condition.

Through grace the "turning" works toward the overcoming of the corruption of the fallen creation, a gradual process that demands lifelong repentance and penitence.⁷⁹ It gives birth to a transmoral conscience that "judges not in obedience to a moral law but according to the participation in a reality that transcends the sphere of moral commands."⁸⁰ The transmoral conscience is driven beyond the moral realm by the unbearable tensions of the sphere of the law. But man is thereby driven to the fulfillment of his being; and fulfillment of one's being is joy.⁸¹ Autonomy is canceled and fulfilled (*aufgehoben*) in theonomy. This is Tillich's characteristic formulation.

The participation is a "mystical participation" in the very power of being, and it engenders a new confidence that overcomes despair. In "the triumphant words of Luther" it is an ecstatic "victory over law, death and the devil."⁸²

It has rightly been said that Albrecht Dürer's engraving, "Knight, Death, and the Devil," is a classic expression of the spirit of the Lutheran Reformation and—it might be added—of Luther's courage of confidence, of his form of the courage to be. A knight in full armor is riding through a valley, accompanied by the figure of death on one side, the devil on the other. Fearlessly, concentrated, confident he looks ahead. He is alone but he is not lonely. In his solitude he participates in the power which gives him the courage to affirm himself in spite of the presence of the negativities of existence. . . . Luther's courage of confidence is personal confidence, derived from a person-to-person encounter with God.⁸³

This new confidence is the consequence of the forgiveness of separation from God, the consequence of a man's accepting that he has been accepted. For Tillich "the psychology of acceptance" presented by Luther ("a great depth psychologist") is "the profoundest one in church history and is confirmed by the best insights of contemporary 'psychology of depth.'"⁸⁴ In Luther's time the experience of acceptance gave release from the anxiety of guilt and condemnation, of fate and death. In our time it gives release from the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness.⁸⁵ But Luther himself knew also the experience of emptiness and meaninglessness. In describing his attacks of utter despair (*Anfechtungen*) he indicates his own awareness of the frightful threat of meaninglessness. In these descriptions he "anticipated the descriptions . . . by modern Existentialism. But for him this was not the last word. The last word was the first commandment, the statement that God is God."⁸⁶

It is puzzling, indeed it is surprising, that Tillich very often

speaks of God as the source of courage, and also of justification, without making reference to Jesus Christ. The omission could of course be interpreted as an aspect of Tillich's apologetic, although the explanation, one must admit, does not really "explain." For Tillich, and of course for Luther, the experience of the courage to be and of justification is integrally related to christology.

Tillich deals in considerable detail with the historic formulations of christological dogma, and particularly with Luther's views. He deals also with Luther's reservations. Luther was hostile to what he thought of as purely speculative interest, whereas Tillich does not exclude "cognitive *eros*" as an element in the shaping of dogmas. At the same time Tillich holds with Luther that the historic formulations are to be understood as "protective" doctrines calculated to preserve the substance of the Christian message against distortion.⁸⁷ For Tillich, as much as for Luther, the dogmatic symbols become empty if they are removed from their root in experience—the experience of the living God in Christ. He points out, for example, that Augustine already recognized the danger of distortion residing in the speculative doctrine of the three *personae* of the Trinity. He then goes on to say that Luther "found that a word like 'Trinity' is strange and almost ridiculous but that here, as in other instances, there was no better one." Being aware of the experiential or existential roots of the Trinitarian idea, Luther "rejected a theology which makes the Trinitarian dialectic into a play with meaningless number combinations."⁸⁸ We shall return presently to consider this experiential theme.

But first we should observe a fundamental aspect of Luther's christology which, Tillich reminds us, distinguishes it from Calvinist christology and which relates it to the general theological or metaphysical outlook already presented in this essay. Here we encounter what has been called the *Infra Lutheranum*. In the Reformed christology the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* held that the finite is not capable of the infinite (*non capax infiniti*), and that consequently the two natures in Christ remain "outside each other." The Lutherans, on the other hand, asserted that "the finite *is* capable of the infinite, and consequently there is in Christ a mutual indwelling of the two natures." For Tillich this Lutheran perspective carries implications that reach beyond the discussion regarding the two natures in Christ. Speaking of the difference between the *Extra Calvinisticum* and the *Infra Lutheranum*, Tillich says that "on Lutheran ground the vision of the presence of the infinite in everything finite was

theologically affirmed, that nature mysticism was possible and real, whereas on Calvinist ground such an attitude is suspect of pantheism, and the divine transcendence is understood in a way which for a Lutheran is suspect of deism."⁸⁹ This perspective in Tillich (and Luther) gives us reason to question the claim being made in some quarters (following Bonhoeffer) that Tillich's outlook should be appraised as inadequate by reason of its understanding of grace as operative only at the boundary-situation. The paradoxical immanence of the transcendent, the nature mysticism, and also the idea of the fulfillment of autonomy in theoconomy indicate that the boundary-situation is not the only point at which man confronts God.

But now we must examine further Tillich's stress on the existential or experiential element in Luther's christology. In his view this element constitutes a fundamental aspect of Luther's method. He speaks of it as a method of correlation, a correlation between what Christ is *pro nobis* and what we say about him.

This method is to be observed in Luther's concern for the work of Christ—for his benefits rather than for his person alongside his works. "Calling Christ God means, for Luther, having experienced divine effects which come from him. If you speak about him *besides* his effects, then this is a wrong, objectifying method. . . . He who has divine effects is divine—this is the criterion."⁹⁰ Here we come again upon Tillich's concept of participation, for in interpreting Luther he asserts that "what we say about Christ has the character of participation—suffering with him, being glorified with him; being crucified with him, being resurrected with him."⁹¹ We encounter here also the emphasis upon contradiction and paradox—the contradiction of human systems of valuation, the paradox of the humility and the glory of Christ.

Accordingly, Tillich lifts up for emphasis Luther's view of the "smallness of God" in the Incarnation. Luther, it will be recalled, had envisaged the ruleless power of God, in the "naked absolute." But man is driven to despair if he directly confronts this naked absolute. Therefore, God has given us Christ, in whom he has made himself small. "Here (in Christ) God appears in his sweetness, mercy, and charity." In Christ one sees the "small God," and Christ is smallest in the cradle. This is the paradox, "that he who is in the cradle is he who is almighty God at the same time."⁹²

For Luther another formulation of the presence of God in Christ (the Incarnation) is the assertion that he is the Word. Tillich discerns three dimensions in Luther's conception of the Word.

Christ is the internal Word, the visible Word (in the flesh), and the spoken Word (the biblical Word). But he is more than the spoken words of the Bible, for they are the Word of God only in an indirect way. Tillich here seizes the occasion to say that Luther was not a theologian of the Word if the term means "talking"; nor would Luther accept the idea that the Word is "preaching," the sense employed when the neo-Protestants speak of "the Church of the Word."⁹³

In Tillich's view, however, Luther is not consistent in his conception of Jesus as the Christ. Despite his emphasis on the lowliness and humanity of Christ, Luther takes the Fourth Gospel to be "the main gospel," and thus "he reads the words of the Synoptic Jesus Christ as if they were the words of the Johannine Christ Jesus, in spite of the literal incompatibility."⁹⁴ Tillich suggests that Luther in this fashion has at least approached a cryptomonophysite position, in short, that he has belied both his own conception of paradox and the *Infra Lutheranum*. Tillich sees exaggeration also in Luther's stress on Christ the judge and on atonement as the paying of a price to anti-divine powers. Luther's emphasis on Christ the pitiless judge apparently produced profound and neurotic anxiety, and it has corrupted the image of Christ as healer and savior.⁹⁵ This criticism is probably Tillich's strongest one against Luther's christology. In faithfulness to Luther's method Tillich (I take it) would prefer to stress the atoning effect of Christ which overcomes existential estrangement, encountered in the experience of the love of God.⁹⁶

Although Tillich held that Luther overstressed the element of judgment, he approved and adopted Luther's dialectical conception of the relation between law and gospel, between law and love. In his view, however, Luther's stress upon the creativity of love tended to make the latter ecstatic rather than disciplined. For Luther "the law prevents or punishes transgression" in the personal and in the political sphere. Moreover, it shows man what he ought to be—what he essentially is. Consequently, it drives him to the quest for reunion with what he essentially is. The reunion is an ecstatic experience "full of creative possibilities" mainly for the personal life. Calvin, on the other hand, with his more institutional orientation and with his "third use of the law," was more readily able to support a rational and ethical theory and practice of a disciplined life of sanctification.⁹⁷ Calvin was therefore able to develop a broader and more positive conception of Christian vocation in face of the institutional structures. Luther in his theological apologetic

was willing to make use of rational criticism. But "his doctrine of love and wrath (of God and the government) prevented him from connecting love with law and justice."⁹⁸ Luther did not sufficiently recognize that "love's strange work can be used by those in power as a means . . . for keeping themselves in power."⁹⁹ Luther's experience was more productive, then, in the personal life.

It is worth noting here that Tillich in his writings on religious socialism makes little use of Luther; in fact, one cannot find a single reference to Luther in his *Die Sozialistische Entscheidung*.

In the light of these criticisms of Luther by Tillich we should not be entirely surprised by the latter's statement: "It is obvious that grace—let us say the 'sin-forgiveness structure' or 'justification-by-grace structure' of Pauline and Lutheran Christianity—is not the only important thing in Christianity. In fact, it has lost much of the central importance it had for Paul and Luther, and even for myself."¹⁰⁰ One should add here a statement that Tillich made repeatedly: that for Paul the doctrine of justification "was not the center of his theology." He held that the center was his experience and doctrine of the Spirit.¹⁰¹ Thus he declared, "The divine Spirit fulfills and so makes possible an approach to the law."¹⁰²

If we take into account this broader conception of the relations between law and gospel, we can see why it is possible to characterize Tillich's whole theological method of correlation as a method of relating law and gospel. The one cannot exist without the other. Moreover, each has its positive place in the "creativity of love." Here Tillich takes a view more akin to Karl Barth's than to Luther's. Accordingly, Tillich rejects the conventional Lutheran doctrine of the Two Kingdoms.¹⁰³ In his view, Luther replaced the element of radical criticism by a strong historical positivism, thus overemphasizing the role of force and the obligation of obedience to political authority.¹⁰⁴ Tillich felt that one must go beyond Luther and deal with the question of how love and power—and love and justice—are to be united.¹⁰⁵

We shall not try to state Tillich's view of Luther's doctrine of the church and the sacraments. He gives relatively little attention to this aspect of Luther's thought. Of his doctrine of the church he says, "There is no doubt that it is his weakest point."¹⁰⁶ And of his doctrine of the sacraments he says that "Luther did not succeed in working out a clear and consistent theory."¹⁰⁷

From this account of Tillich's view of Luther one can readily see that for Tillich Luther was a decisive figure (among others) in the shaping of his own outlook, much more so than is generally recognized. We have observed also that Tillich selects for treatment or emphasis those aspects of Luther's thought which (*in his view*) have a special pertinence for contemporary man. Consequently, he attempts to present Luther by means of a vocabulary that is calculated to speak effectively to men of our time. He also expands certain root-ideas of Luther in new directions. He has not tried, then, to bring about a restoration. In close affinity to Wilhelm Pauck he has attempted to perform the role of the historical theologian—to intervene creatively in history.¹⁰⁸

Here we are reminded of Harnack's statement that every really significant reformation in the history of religion is primarily a "critical reduction" to its essential features.¹⁰⁹ Tillich, in interpreting Luther, took a critical attitude toward his social philosophy and his doctrine of the church and the sacraments. He gave his major attention, and his positive appreciation, to the essential features of a critical reduction. By this means he attempted to give meaning *in our time* to Luther's conception of the divine majesty and grace, and of the authentic response of faith. Here his presentation is effulgent and by no means contracted, though it exhibits an emphasis and also omissions that more precise exegetes can challenge. Yet, if Tillich's contribution is measured by the criterion of "critical reduction" and by the criterion of effectiveness of apologetic, he ranks high among "interpreters of Luther."

N O T E S

¹ These essays appear under the title, "Die Wiederentdeckung der prophetischen Tradition in der Reformation," *Gesammelte Werke* VII (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1962), 171-215. They are a transcript of lectures that initially appeared in English and in mimeographed form under the imprint of the Committee on Christianity and Modern Man Lectures, Washington Cathedral (1950); in this form they are now out of print. Tillich revised them for the German version, and wished the latter to be considered the authoritative version. Hereafter in this essay *Gesammelte Werke* will be designated *GW*. In addition, four lectures on Luther appear in the unauthorized, privately mimeographed lectures in *A History of Christian Thought*, recorded and edited by P. John (1953).

² *On the Boundary* (New York: Scribner's, 1966), pp. 74-75. This little volume is a revision, newly translated, of Part I of *The Interpretation of History* (New York: Scribner's, 1936).

³ *Religiöse Verwirklichung* (2nd ed.; Berlin: Furche, 1930), p. 85. For a further explication of the demand for contemporaneity of formulation, see "The Protestant Message and the Man of Today," *The Protestant Era*, trans. James L. Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter XIII, a lecture that was delivered initially in 1928. Hereafter

the former work will be designated *RV* and the latter *PE*. *The Protestant Era* was dedicated "To Wilhelm Pauck, friend and helper."

⁴ "Holls Lutherbuch," *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 381. *Literarische Um- schau*, no. 33 (1922) p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.* Tillich suggests that Holl would have done well here to approach Augustine and the Middle Ages with the same method, that is, from within, in order to show that "the cultural situation from which, for example, the Augustinian concepts of love and grace issued, may not be measured only by the standard with which Luther struggled against the hardening and distortions of these concepts in the waning Middle Ages."

⁶ *Ibid.* At this point Tillich makes a significant observation. He says that Holl's rejection of the Troeltschean thesis that Luther belongs to the Middle Ages is really "of minor significance," for Luther "belongs neither to the Middle Ages nor to the modern period but rather to the great, entirely unique period between 1250 and 1750, for which he represents the turning point and the high point."

⁷ *PE*, p. 196.

⁸ *A History of Christian Thought*, p. 186. These lectures were first delivered at Union Theological Seminary in the spring of 1953. It should be noted that Tillich did not authorize the publication of this transcript,

⁹ The criticisms noted here are scattered throughout Tillich's writings, but see especially, "The Protestant Principle and the Proletarian Situation," *PE*, Chapter XI.

¹⁰ "Der Protestantismus als kritisches und gestaltendes Prinzip," in *Protestantismus als Kritik und Gestaltung. Zweites Buch des Kairos-Kreises*, ed. Paul Tillich (Darmstadt: Otto Reichl, 1929). Reprinted in *GW*, VII (1962) 29-53. The exposition in the present essay relies also upon formulations that appear in an unpublished manuscript in English, "The Rise of Protestantism" (no date), now in the Tillich Archive, Andover Harvard Library, Harvard Divinity School.

¹¹ *GW*, VII, 33. Cf. "Vertical and Horizontal Thinking," *American Scholar*, XV, no. 1 (Winter 1945-46) 102-05.

¹² *PE*, p. 200.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ "Religiöser Sozialismus I," in *GW*, II, 156, 164.

¹⁶ *PE*, p. 169.

¹⁷ *GW*, VII, 36.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁹ *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963; New York: Harper, 1967), III, 135. Hereafter designated as *ST*.

²⁰ *PE*, p. 163.

²¹ *PE*, p. xvi.

²² *PE*, p. xxv.

²³ *ST*, III, 135.

²⁴ *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, ed. and with intro. by Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper, 1967), p. 13.

²⁵ *A History of Christian Thought*, p. 202.

²⁶ *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), pp. 128, 164; *ST*, II, 178.

²⁷ *GW*, IX, 262; *ST*, II, 78; *ST*, III, 128, 227.

²⁸ *Love, Power, and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 86.

²⁹ *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University, 1952), pp. 60-63, 170; *GW*, IX, 79.

³⁰ *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1955), p. 55.

³¹ *GW*, IX, 24; *PE*, 146.

³² *PE*, 80; *ST*, III, 229.

³³ *A History of Christian Thought*, p. 202.

³⁴ "Rechtfertigung und Zweifel," *Vorträge der theologischen Konferenz zu Giessen*, Series 39 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1924) pp. 19-32. We have given here only the skeleton of an extremely complex essay. The core of this interpretation of justification appears in the sentence, "The justification of the doubter is only possible as the breaking of unconditional certainty through the sphere of uncertainties and errors; it is the breaking through of certainty that the truth which the doubter seeks, the meaning of life for which the one in despair struggles, is not the goal but rather the presupposition of all doubt even up to despair" (p. 24).

³⁵ *PE*, p. xvi.

³⁶ *ST*, I, 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *GW*, VII, 34.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *GW*, VI, 31. Translation by Paul B. Means, *Things That Are Caesar's* (New York: Round Table Press, 1935), p. 137.

⁴¹ *PE*, 169. (Quoted by permission of the publisher.)

⁴² The provenance of this coinage (as Tillich conceived it) became abundantly evident to students who heard Tillich's lectures on Plotinus and on German classical philosophy. Tillich obviously did not agree with Luther that metaphysical gnoseological speculation compromises the majesty of God.

⁴³ *GW*, VII, 177.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁴⁷ *Perspectives*, p. 21.

⁴⁸ *PE*, 10.

⁴⁹ "Existential Philosophy" in *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 94.

⁵⁰ *PE*, 10-11.

⁵¹ *Perspectives*, p. 194.

⁵² *GW*, VII, 178.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁵⁵ *Perspectives*, p. 194.

⁵⁶ *ST*, I, 180, 262, 273.

⁵⁷ *GW*, VII, 224.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁵⁹ *ST*, I, 262.

⁶⁰ *GW*, VII, 178.

⁶¹ Wilhelm Pauck, *Luther: Lectures on Romans* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), Introduction, p. xxxix.

⁶² *GW*, VII, 177.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁶⁶ *Love, Power, and Justice*, pp. 49-51. Contrast this treatment of Luther with "Love's Strange Work," *The Protestant*, IV, No. 3 (December-January 1942) 70-75.

⁶⁷ "Der Begriff des Dämonischen und seine Bedeutung für die sys-

tematische Theologie," *Theologische Blätter*, V, No. 2 (Feb. 1926) 35.

⁶⁸ *ST*, I, 217.

⁶⁹ *On the Boundary*, p. 79.

⁷⁰ *GW*, VII, 195.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *GW*, VI, 167; *PE*, xxi; *ST*, II, 79; *ST*, III, 186.

⁷³ *ST*, II, 39.

⁷⁴ Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, "A German Lutheran Theologian in America," in Heinz Brunotte and Erich Ruppel (eds.), *Gott ist am Werk*. (Hamburg: Im Furche-Verlag, 1959), p. 29. Dr. Pelikan points out that Tillich is less concerned about the Manichaean heresy than about the Pelagian.

⁷⁵ *ST*, II, 47. Tillich here goes beyond the formulation of sin in the Augsburg Confession, which defines it as the state of man wherein he is "without faith in God and with concupiscence."

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Despite this residue in Luther's thought, Tillich asserts that—in comparison with Luther—Freud is ascetic in his basic assumption about the nature of man. *ST*, II, 54.

⁷⁸ *GW*, VII, 191.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *PE*, 145.

⁸¹ *ST*, II, 80.

⁸² *PE*, 80 (Quoted by permission of the publisher)

⁸³ *The Courage To Be*, pp. 161-62.

⁸⁴ *ST*, III, 227.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164 ff.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 139.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 144.

⁸⁹ "Autobiographical Reflections," in Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (eds.), *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 5.

⁹⁰ *History of Christian Thought*, p. 204.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, 206.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁹⁴ *ST*, II, 138.

⁹⁵ *ST*, II, 162, 164.

⁹⁶ *ST*, II, 170-71.

⁹⁷ *ST*, III, 229.

⁹⁸ *PE*, p. xxv.

⁹⁹ *Love, Power, and Justice*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁰ *Ultimate Concern*, ed. D. Mackenzie Brown (New York: Harper, 1965), p. 115.

¹⁰¹ *Perspectives*, p. 21.

¹⁰² *Ultimate Concern*, p. 114.

¹⁰³ *RV*, 233-52.

¹⁰⁴ *GW*, VII, 212.

¹⁰⁵ *Love, Power, and Justice*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁶ *History of Christian Thought*, p. 206.

¹⁰⁷ *PE*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁸ See Wilhelm Pauck, *Harnack and Troeltsch: Two Historical Theologians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

¹⁰⁹ *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Stuttgart: Klotz Verlag, 1950), p. 160.

WILHELM PAUCK: A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

MARION HAUSNER PAUCK

IT IS about an hour's drive from Marburg, Germany, to Laasphe, a Westphalian town surrounded by rolling, pine-covered hills and rich farmland alternating in yellow and pale-green patches. For miles around the dark green hills and the pastel fields provide one with the loveliest, certainly the gentlest countryside in all of Germany. It was in the town of Laasphe that Johannes Bonemilch, the well-to-do and intelligent bishop-theologian who ordained Martin Luther in 1507, was born. Here also, some centuries later, on January 31, 1901, Wilhelm Pauck first saw the light of day.¹

Wilhelm Pauck's forefathers on his father's side were Westphalian landowners and dyers.² One member of the family, demonstrating the enterprising spirit still typical of the Pauck tribe, on losing his homestead by fire, emigrated to America in the mid-19th century. He established a woolen mill in the Midwest, where it flourished. Pauck's mother came from Hilchenbach, not far from Laasphe, where her father had been a hotelier. From his father, Wilhelm Pauck inherited a strong voice, speaking talent, wit, generosity, intelligence, honesty, humor, and a gait which can only be described as resembling the attempt to walk through tall grass. His mother was gentle and loving but somewhat overprotective. Her firstborn son, who resembles her so far as facial characteristics are concerned, did not inherit her anxious nature, although it is doubtless true that her loving attentions lavished upon him had the effect of encouraging him to succeed. From her, as well, he inherited the desire to read omnivorously, and a strong disposition toward perfectionism.

The young Paucks and their infant son lived for the first year of his life in a house near the Wittgenstein castle (now a girls' school) on a hilltop overlooking the town. From these somewhat idyllic surroundings the family moved to the nearby town of Burgsteinfurt, where Wilhelm spent his first school year. Wilhelm's father was then called to Berlin to teach physics at the Institute of Technology. He combined a teaching career with public lecturing and consulting for industrial firms. He specialized in problems of physics from which

ultimately there developed modern radio broadcasting and television. When Wilhelm was fifteen or sixteen, he became one of the first to broadcast songs and recite poems in Berlin Philharmonic Hall, where his father lectured on the "wireless," as radio broadcasting was called at the time.

In Berlin, which was to become young Wilhelm's spiritual home and which is the only city to which he still has deep emotional ties, the Pauck family settled in Steglitz at Breitestrasse 22. Three children, two boys and one girl, were born in the succeeding years. Paul, the second-born and by nature gentle and witty, became a botanist; Hans, plagued by chronic bad luck throughout his short life, shy and fearful like his mother, died at the age of 14, of flu; Annemarie, the adoring younger sister, became a nurse, married a surgeon, and reared three daughters in widowhood. Both Paul Pauck and his family, and Annemarie Pauck Lamprecht and hers, live in Germany, near Munich.

Wilhelm and his siblings grew up in the atmosphere of a happy home. Gentle discipline from their father—who was not a typical authoritarian German *pater familias* because he was not austere—combined with the loving care of their mother, provided the children, especially the eldest son, with the inner freedom and outer security which love and discipline, dispensed in appropriate doses, can supply. Wilhelm collected butterflies, plants, and lizards, to the horror of his mother, who always freed them while her children weren't around to prevent her. Wilhelm was active, and made friends easily. Yet he was shy, secretive, and modest. Pictures of the eleven-year-old show a remarkable resemblance to the mature man and reflect a strong, determined expression.

The behavior of the youth of the early twentieth century was more innocent than it is of today's but it was neither inhibited nor repressed. There were certain social forms to which the young were naturally expected to conform: children ate the noon meal with their parents and left the table only with parental permission; children normally spoke only when spoken to at the dinner table and were expected to treat their elders, whether teachers or parents, with respect. In the case of the Pauck household, the image the father projected was fortunately a loving one and the ties between him and his children were enforced by affection and not by fear. The father's extracurricular lectures earned him additional moneys which he dispensed sometimes too generously but which he always was able to regain through his popularity.

The shadow of war fell upon this happy brood in 1914, and it left its mark. For Wilhelm Pauck grew up during the years of the first World War. The development of his self-consciousness and world-consciousness was conditioned by the situation of a world at war. In a speech he gave at the University of Chicago (November 1939) he said:

When I became aware of the world about me, it was full of victories and defeats in battle, of men in uniform, and of women in mourning clothes, of wounded men in the streets and of prisoners of war at work in the fields and on the highways. The joys of my boyhood were intermingled with the pains of hunger and cold and hampered by the worries of my mother who, while my father was somewhere in Poland behind the Russian front, often did not know how to feed us rationed meals and how to keep us in clothing.³

In spite of the war, Wilhelm received an excellent classical education at a Realgymnasium [the red brick building with its schoolyard still stands intact today] a few blocks from the Breitestrasse. In addition to the regular course of arithmetic, history, geography, and the sciences, Wilhelm studied Greek, Latin, and French. It was usual to study Hebrew as well, but he chose English instead. Later, at the University of Berlin, at the beginning of his theological studies, he learned Hebrew. The school was "tough," a fact for which he remains grateful even today. And his schooldays were marked by

lessons interrupted by memorial exercises held for teachers and former students who had been killed in battle. We received instructions from very young, or sick, or very old teachers. We had long vacations because there was a lack of coal with which to heat school-rooms, or because, in the summer, we had to work on farms to bring in the harvest and because, in the winter, we had to clear the streets of ice and snow so that military transports could pass.⁴

Throughout his school life, Wilhelm Pauck was at the head of his class. In 1917, he won the Emperor's Prize as the best student of the school. He received the prize on the Emperor's Birthday, and on the same day he saw his first opera, *Martha*, by Friedrich von Flotow, in the Berlin Opera House. He is still devoted to opera, indeed to all music, and in his younger days, when stricken by the comic muse, he performed entire operas for his friends, unaided by the assistance of instruments or other voices! In 1920, upon his graduation from the Gymnasium, he won a special prize for excellent scholarship and was presented with two volumes of the *History of Philosophy* by Friedrich Paulsen.

Immediately after graduation he was mustered for military serv-

ice. Many of his schoolmates had been drafted in their eighteenth year. Before his turn came, they had been trained and sent to France and some had fallen during their first days on the front. On the day Wilhelm Pauck had to report for military service, the armistice was declared. The war was over.

The world into which Pauck had been born, a civilization of quiet order, of princes and emperors, and a long reign of peace, had been broken, never again to be healed. Revolutions broke out, street fighting, political *Putsche* and inflation brought disorder and famine. The young people found themselves enveloped by a cloud of "isms" which had entered the vacuum left by the old order. Political parties of all kinds sprang up. Wilhelm and his contemporaries debated the pros and cons of nationalism, communism, conservatism, radicalism, idealism, materialism, expressionism, and occultism, while preparing for professional training.

Against this background of pessimism and confusion, Pauck registered at the University of Berlin in 1920. It was his intention, as it had always been, to become a teacher of philosophy and history. And so he spent his first year taking a great number of general courses, while emphasizing historical subjects. Early in the semester, Spengler's *Decline of the West* fell into his hands. In a rare autobiographical piece, written twenty years later, he described this event:

Spengler's book happened to fall into my hands. There the meaning of it all seemed to be explained. Western civilization had entered the last phase of its economic strife, as the Egyptian, Graeco-Roman, and other civilizations before it had died. The world war marked the beginning of the inevitable process of decay. . . . The only decent way of living would be to submit to this fate and love it with the calm resolve of men about to die. Spengler addressed himself particularly to his young readers and told them to heed the signs of their times and to give themselves realistically to their tasks. He advised them not to waste their time with religion, philosophy, literature, and the arts, but to take up engineering, naval and military science, and politics.

But here is the reason why I did not yield to Spengler. . . . I met men—professors, lecturers, ministers, fellow students, and also simple farmers and peasants—who, while they carried their full share of the tribulations of their times, were unshaken in the spiritual roots that bound them to a world indestructible by wars and economic insecurity, by suffering and death. They held their heads high and kept their hearts strong not because they believed themselves victims of a blind fate and marionettes in the hands of an inscrutable destiny but because they knew that they were instruments of an eternal will that governs the universe with a purpose and that used them for the realization of this purpose.⁵

Pauck's refusal to yield to Spengler and the voices of hopeless pessimism, and his desire to cooperate with "men of hope" constitute, in a way, the story of his life.

At the University of Berlin there were many "men of hope"—indeed their like has not been seen since—men of incomparable learning and of genuine wisdom. Two of these, namely Ernst Troeltsch and Karl Holl, exercised in widely differing ways the most outstanding and decisive influence upon Pauck's intellectual development.

Pauck's experience of Ernst Troeltsch was his "greatest experience of a lecturer." He was swept off his feet by Troeltsch's eloquence and impressed by his extraordinary learning. Troeltsch, who lectured in the largest auditorium in the university, held his huge student audiences spellbound. Every Wednesday and Saturday from eleven to one he played with fascinating ideas, freely associating during the first hour. He quoted at length—and without the slightest effort—from Goethe and the classics. After an intense study of his notes during intermission, Troeltsch delivered during the second hour the lecture for which he had prepared during the first. He was a handsome, mustached man who always arrived nattily dressed, his hair neatly combed. Within moments after his arrival, however, his hair was mussed because he had run his fingers through it while talking. He wore a pince-nez with which he was constantly playing catch as it fell off his nose and dangled from the vest pocket to which it was attached.

It was Pauck's experience of Troeltsch, not only as a "performer" but also as a thinker, which bowled him over. Troeltsch's seminar on philosophy, history, and civilization was a showcase for his great learning and for his passion to make sense of history in a contemporaneous way. Troeltsch's liberal views regarding Christianity and its universal validity, his desire to overcome history by history through transformation: that is to say, his openness *to all of culture* are typical of what appealed so vividly to Pauck. Troeltsch had no hard party line; indeed, he was above party disputes and virtually ignored those who, like Karl Holl, attacked him. Troeltsch's approach seemed to the young Pauck to be relevant to the problems which the crumbling civilization of the west had left behind.

Then Pauck began to read Troeltsch's books. He discovered that most of them were theological. He discovered that Troeltsch had been a theologian until 1915, and that although he taught history of philosophy at the University of Berlin, he had published works on

both the historical phases of Christianity and the philosophy of religion. This discovery—combined with Troeltsch's injunction to his students that those who wished to become philosophers should not do so without first having a grounding in another discipline such as religion, history, or the natural sciences—wrought a change in Pauck's intentions. He began to toy with the notion of studying theology.

It had never occurred to Pauck before to study theology. Although he had read theological books, his chief interest lay in history and philosophy. While his parents were not hostile to the church, they were not church people, nor was the general spirit of his family determined by the church. But some distant relatives on his father's side who were landowners and farmers in Wester-Enger in Westphalia were faithful church people. Pauck spent summer vacations with them while at the university. He remembers these days with great joy. Farmwork was combined with intellectual work: he harvested potatoes and drove the horses of a mowing machine during the day. At night he read and had his first romances. The marvelous and kindly old gentleman who owned the farm, Uncle Gustav, was a faithful churchgoer, as was his family. In fact, he led a prayer service every morning before the entire household began to work. Wilhelm was horrified to note that orthodoxy was still being preached. In an attempt to modernize the service he gave Uncle Gustav a modern prayerbook, but the old gentleman was not readily converted. While working in the fields with rural workers, Wilhelm discovered that they were fed up with the church because of the influence of propaganda spread by the socialists. He tried to explain the meaning of religion in modern terms to the workers, and they responded positively. These incidents served to encourage the young Pauck in his secret plan to study theology.

Upon his return to the university, Pauck switched from history to theology. He found himself thrilled by the historical interpretation of everything. Most of the teachers at the University of Berlin at that time used the historical method. Most of them, also, were exponents of liberal theology. The use of the historical method was attractive to Pauck and greatly excited him and his thought. It was therefore with considerable alarm that he experienced a major attack upon the historical method and its proponents in the winter of 1922.

As a member of Wingolf, a Christian fraternity, Pauck had been delegated to represent the Wingolfites at a missionary conference. At this conference missionaries from Sumatra, just returned from mass conversions of the Bataks, attempted to recruit students for mission-

ary work. Pauck and others protested. They argued that missionary propaganda was not to be undertaken among peoples and nations where Buddhism and Islam flourished, because these world religions had produced civilizations which could not survive under the Christian gospel and would not respond to it. The young protesters, including Pauck, were isolated and interviewed by the missionaries who tried to win them over. Pauck remembers his interviewer as an impressive man, who assailed his teachers, Harnack and Troeltsch. This attack so unbalanced Pauck that he made inquiries as to where he might find a different kind of interpretation than the one he was getting at the University of Berlin. He was told to try out the University of Göttingen; Pauck studied there 1922-23.

As a matter of fact, it was customary for German students to attend more than one university during their course of study. At Göttingen, Karl Barth had just arrived from Switzerland, having there completed his book on *Romans*. He lectured at seven in the morning, was usually late and arrived out of breath. He expounded Calvin's theology in a heavy Swiss brogue, and he sat up with students until all hours of the night in order to promote discussion and debate. Karl Stange was also teaching at Göttingen at the time. Pauck was very disappointed in Stange because he ignored the historical dimension of thought. He found Barth, on the other hand, personally attractive and stimulating. On reading his *Commentary on Romans*, however, he found him much too extreme in his point of view. Pauck remained in a quandary; he felt unable to regain the confidence he had placed in his earlier teachers. The missionary's interview had long-lasting effects, and at the University of Göttingen he could find no alternative to theology in the liberal sense.

At this point a friend sent Pauck a volume of Luther essays by the great church historian Karl Holl. In these essays, Pauck found his solution. On the one hand, he noted that Holl used the strictest historical methods, methods which Pauck had already found attractive; on the other hand, he realized that Luther's interpretation of Christianity was relevant to the day. Holl's book on Luther, in short, seemed to transcend the problem of liberal theology *vs.* Barth. Pauck returned to Berlin to study with Holl.⁶

Holl was very learned. His seminar always started out with about fifty participants and soon shrank to ten. He asked his students to translate at sight from the Latin, and that usually removed a number of candidates from the roll call at the very start. Pauck remembers having to translate Erasmus from the Latin. He did very well until he

reached the bottom of the page only to be unable to find the *verbum finitum*. Holl took the book from him and translated completely without effort. Holl was not only a great church historian, he was also a great teacher. He knew how to make his students work hard and with painstaking critical accuracy. Pauck's natural perfectionism was encouraged by Holl's high standards. Many seminar papers were written by Pauck, including one on Luther's Christology, and he also did special research work in ancient medieval and modern church history. He wrote his dissertation, entitled *De Regno Christi*, on Bucer; it is still one of the basic titles on the Bucer bibliography.

The impact of Pauck's encounter with the modern study of Luther was tremendous. He became aware that his interests in contemporary theology and modern church life could be maintained without forsaking the historical method and the criticism of the Christian tradition. He came to believe that Luther's interpretation of the Christian gospel was the right one, and on this basis he found himself becoming an historian of theology.

But there was one point at which Pauck parted company with Holl and the other members of the Holl *Schule*. And that point was Holl's criticism of Troeltsch, to which we have already made some reference. Holl's criticism was based largely on two factors: First, Holl felt that statements made by historians should rely on primary sources alone. Troeltsch relied on secondary sources as well. Second, Holl regarded Luther as beyond reproach. Troeltsch had been critical of Luther, and Holl resented this. Pauck's loyalty to Troeltsch did not waver under the impact of Holl's criticism.

Pauck's intimate friendships were mainly with the Wingolfites. Holl gave Pauck tickets to all the public sessions of the Academy of Sciences. If pressed on this point, Pauck says it was because as a Wingolfite his manners were impeccable, and Holl recognized this. But perhaps Holl respected Pauck for his independence and diligence as well.

For Pauck the experience of Harnack, whom he has described as the most human of all these great men, was unfortunately brief. Harnack retired in 1920, but continued as lecturer *emeritus*, a custom still extant in Germany today. Pauck attended two of Harnack's lecture courses and describes him as a very impressive, admirable, highly entertaining old gentleman. He was the most famous church historian of the time and was indeed a "king of scholars." He knew how to relate church history to everything else, and he demonstrated how dogma developed, rose, and collapsed. The morning after

Troeltsch's untimely death, Harnack meditated on Troeltsch to his class. After the meditation was ended, the entire student body rose as one man, without a sign from Harnack, who bowed in return. Pauck describes this as one of the most moving of his student experiences.⁷

The influence on Wilhelm Pauck of these learned men is not a thing of the past. Pictures of these gentlemen, all taken in their prime and all signed, hang on the walls of his study, which also houses his fabulous library. As one enters the study he is immediately struck by a row of formidable portraits—a rather severe looking Holl; a proud, handsome Troeltsch; a soulful, humane, gentle Harnack; a smiling Barth. A picture of benevolent, shaggy-bearded Arthur Titius, whom we have not yet mentioned, hangs beside them. Titius taught a seminar on Schleiermacher, which Pauck attended, and he visited the University of Chicago in the 1920's when Pauck was already a member of the Chicago Theological Seminary faculty. The Titiuses were friendly folk and frequently invited the young and poor postwar students in for tea. Mrs. Titius, in fact, ran her own "charity." She came to her husband's seminar in order to ask each student the same question, "What is your shirt size? your collar size?" She immediately produced a shirt, if the matching size was available. Pauck remembers Titius as a "very nice guy."

Although Wilhelm Pauck was a brilliant and diligent student [he graduated *magna cum laude*] he was also gregarious and full of fun. A young man whom he had befriended in the Troeltsch seminar persuaded him to join the Eucken Club, dedicated to Rudolf Eucken, who interpreted the German and philosophical traditions in such a way that it appealed to the scientific views of modern man. Club members were mostly from the middle class, and included intelligent women, retired generals, and the cream of Berlin society. Wilhelm's lectures at these meetings introduced him to an older social circle and provided him with intellectual opportunities of an unusual sort. When his father became aware of the circumstances, he feared that his son was being spoiled, and teasingly urged him to join a young people's group. Pauck left the Eucken Club and joined the Wingolf fraternity, to which Paul Tillich [later an intimate friend of Pauck's] had belonged nearly twenty years earlier.

The years in Wingolf (one at Berlin, one at Göttingen) were years of marvelous companionship. Wilhelm held all three leading offices, known as "X". He was presiding officer, trainer of the *Füchse* [freshmen], and secretary. The Wingolf fraternity was dedicated to Christian principles, was anti-alcohol and anti-dueling. Membership

was open to all Christian students of medicine, theology, or law. Free and open debate flourished at its meetings. The motto of this fraternity [reactivated after the second World War, and still extant⁸] was *Di henos panta*, which in Greek means "Everything through One." Membership in the fraternity provided an informal means of meeting young women, who could otherwise not be contacted, apparently, except through formal gatherings at the professors' homes. It is of interest to note here that Troeltsch never attended such meetings. The professors, their wives, and their daughters often staged "at-homes" that were unfortunately stiff and understandably unpopular. In general, the relationship between students and their professors was formal and impersonal. Students never attacked their professors' views but, when asking questions, couched criticism in careful language. On the other hand, German students of this era treated one another with complete openness. If they disagreed with one another, they were likely to say, "You idiot! How can you speak such nonsense?" Pauck noted later in America that the relationships were reversed. Students felt free to criticize their professors openly whereas students disagreed with one another in only the most tentative and respectful tones. They would say, "I basically agree with what you have to say, but don't you think we might consider another point of view?"

When Pauck's university training came to an end on July 25, 1925, he was awarded the degree of Licentiate of Theology, equivalent to a doctorate in theology but maintained out of loyalty to the academic traditions of the Middle Ages. It entitled its owner to lecture on theological subjects at the university level. Because he thought that Americans did not understand the meaning of the degree, Professor Gustav Krüger, a church historian who taught for a year at the University of Chicago, persuaded the University of Giessen to give Pauck a doctorate of theology *honoris causa*. This degree was granted on November 10, 1933, Luther's 450th birthday. Because the University of Berlin feared obvious political complications at the time, the University of Giessen remedied the omission.

Two dramatic events coincided with the end of Wilhelm Pauck's student career. First, he met and fell in love with Olga Dietz, a vivacious and beautiful young widow whom he married in 1928; and second, he turned down the offer of a position as *Privatdozent* at the University of Königsberg in favor of a year of study at the Chicago Theological Seminary, offered him by the Theological Faculty of the

University of Berlin and the Federal Council of the German churches.

CAREER IN AMERICA

Armed with German learning and an American spirit, Wilhelm Pauck sailed for the United States in the fall of 1925. When he reached America, he was not permitted to disembark because the University of Chicago had failed to register with the Department of Labor.⁹ When he appeared before the board of examiners at Ellis Island, where he was forced to spend one night, he made a statement, his first American speech, demanding to know how it was possible to doubt the word of a great and distinguished university! He convinced the smiling [Pauck felt he was amused by his German accent] redhaired chairman of his right to disembark. The next morning, with the aid of a representative of the International Institute of Education, he went ashore. After a few days in New York, he entrained for the Midwest and Chicago Theological Seminary, where he remained until 1926.

Pauck's first year in this country was filled with new and exciting, sometimes baffling experiences. He easily related to the American way of life and its informality, although in at least one case his German training caused amusement. In Germany, it was customary for a student to visit his professors and present himself to them in their homes on a Sunday afternoon. True to this custom, Pauck dressed himself quite formally one Sunday early in the semester, and presented himself to each of his new American professors, much to their surprise and Pauck's consequent embarrassment. From the beginning, his learning impressed all, and his humanity won their hearts.

Pauck's appointment to the faculty of Chicago Theological Seminary in the fall of 1926 was unexpected, the end result of several fairly dramatic events. In April, he had returned to Germany, and was negotiating with the University of Göttingen for a teaching position. His sponsor at the University of Berlin, Karl Holl, had died, erasing earlier hopes for Pauck to teach there. The University of Göttingen tried to persuade Pauck to teach Hanoverian church history. Pauck refused, saying he wanted to teach American church history. The university representatives remained adamant, and so did Pauck. On the very afternoon that Pauck made it boldly explicit that

he had no intention of teaching Hanoverian church history, he returned to his hotel to discover on the table in his room a telegram announcing Henry H. Walker's death¹⁰ and inviting him to return to Chicago as Walker's successor. Pauck took this telegram to be a "sign from heaven" and accepted the call.

In the announcement of his appointment in the Chicago Theological Seminary newsletter, Ozora S. Davis, president of the seminary, reported:

From the beginning of his residence, Mr. Pauck has won and held the admiration and friendship of Seminary students and officials alike, and his appointment for next year is most gratifying.¹¹

And when Mr. Davis resigned, for reasons of ill health in 1929, he wrote in "A Retrospect of Twenty Years" the following:

As successor to Henry H. Walker, Professor Wilhelm Pauck has brought the ideals and standards of German theological education to root them with profit in American soil.¹²

Wilhelm Pauck's career at the University of Chicago spanned 27 years. When he arrived there, hardly anyone owned an automobile. By the time he left, the space age had begun. By then, too, he had achieved international prominence as teacher, lecturer, author, and administrator. His progress was swift.

By the age of 30, Wilhelm Pauck was full professor at the Chicago Theological Seminary, and by 1939 he had become a member of the faculty at the University of Chicago Divinity School as well. In 1942, the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago, a federation of several theological schools with the university, came into being. In 1945 he became a member of the history department at the University of Chicago. In this double teaching capacity he remained until he left Chicago for Union Theological Seminary, New York, in 1953.

At the age of 35, Wilhelm Pauck was elected president of the American Society of Church History. In 1931, he wrote a book on Karl Barth, as co-introducer (with Douglas Horton) of that great theologian to the American scene. By 1950 he was widely known as one of the leading authorities on the Reformation and Martin Luther. In the heyday of the University of Chicago—under the chancellorship of Robert Hutchins, whom Pauck still greatly admires—he served on all the major administrative committees of that university. From 1942 on, he was chairman of the theological field in the theological faculty. When the University Senate was organized, members of the senate had a right to vote for the university council and the

council committee, representing the faculty in administration. Pauck was elected to the committee of the university, a position which led to all kinds of other committee appointments.

For years, together with James H. Nichols, Pauck edited *Church History* and from 1943 to 1953 he was a member of the board of editors of the University of Chicago Press. As author, he wrote many book reviews and produced articles and books on the Reformation period, contemporary theology, American education, politics, and the ecumenical movement. As a lecturer, both in the classroom and out, he achieved considerable popularity, and was kept busier than was beneficial for his own writing. But it is as a teacher that he achieved his greatest success.

One of his most brilliant and productive students refers to Pauck's teaching career as his "fabulous métier." From the beginning, his students were treated to an honest and direct approach in which he shared an intellectual quest with them. He normally lectured standing up, bending slightly from the waist, waving his right hand in circular motion at his side to emphasize points, drawing the index finger of his right hand down the side of his nose when in a meditative mood, and shouting at the top of his lungs at a climax. Pauck always enjoyed laughter, and he still knows how to make his audiences laugh with him and how to rouse them from their sleep. His ability to make historical events and characters come alive, an endless fund of anecdotes, including some vivid descriptions of martyrdom, and a passion for arousing in his students a love of history and theology—all remain part of the Pauckian classroom magic.

Pauck is convinced that "exterior, and especially the interior reasons and forces should be fully discussed in a history of Christian thought." Without an understanding of the inner life of the personalities who shaped events through their impact upon the general life of their times, it is not possible, he believes, to grasp historical movements and the meaning they bear for the present. Pauck's insight into human personality, his lucid and simple exposition, and his sharp, critical analysis all combine to put flesh on the bones of past events. During his first years at Chicago Theological Seminary, his love for his students was poetically expressed in a paragraph included in the *Register*. He wrote of his summer vacation, and then confessed,

But all through my vacation, the thought of my new classes filled my soul with a constant joyful restlessness.¹³

No teacher can demand of his students what he has not already

achieved for himself. Pauck has always demanded from himself as much clarity in both style and content of the written and spoken word as he has from his students. He does not cheat, and he expects his students not to. If he feels a man has not done his best, he lets him know it, sometimes long after a former student has become a professor in his own right. His uncompromising love of scholarly excellence has made not a few of his colleagues, not to say students, uneasy.

Pauck's clowning, his tendency to "ham it up" in class in order to make his subject come alive, is done not so much in order to amuse as to instruct. His histrionic talents have become refined through the years. One might compare him to an orchestra conductor who builds a symphony from pianissimo to forte and back again, with precision, power, and a gentle touch. During a lecture given at the University of Chicago in 1965, the late Paul Tillich sat in the front row. He was already frail and ailing but he sat in rapt attentiveness, listening to his old and intimate friend lecture on the history of Luther research since 1900. Afterwards, Tillich said to Pauck, "Wilhelm, it was just like wine, like old wine, like Moselle."

Pauck has turned out as many able doctoral candidates as one would be likely to find. There is a Pauck *Schule*, and members of it are apt to make clear that they belong to it. It means that they have been carefully and honestly trained. Pauck lets his students develop along their own frontiers; he does not consider imitation sincere flattery. His genius at shepherding his flock of graduate students through the prairie lands prior to completion of dissertations is a composite of human concern and the same discipline he underwent in Holl's seminar. He helps them define their interest and makes them work hard. He gives generously of his time, often at the sacrifice of his own work; he urges them to face the dragon of writing as soon as they are ready to, to be bold in their judgments but not sloppy, to be definite about their decisions, and above all to be enthusiastic. He is father-confessor, not because he seeks the role but because his students realize that he cares about them and that his advice is practical.

On one occasion a student came to Pauck for advice, and he said, to the student's astonishment, "Do you want me to tell you what to do, or shall I counsel with you?" His friends come to him for advice as well. The late Paul Tillich once said about him, "I have never made a major decision without discussing it with Wilhelm first. He is always right."

Pauck's rooting of German theological education in American soil was successful, but at the outset it was a problem for him. He found that his American colleagues' unfavorable reaction to German theology was twofold. Adherents of liberalism or humanism either attacked or idealized continental theology; they attacked writers like Barth, and they idealized men like Harnack or Deissmann. A case in point is discovered in Pauck's relation to Paul Tillich and Karl Barth. In 1921 Pauck discovered Tillich, read his books, and found himself greatly impressed. In his essays Tillich took the same point of view which Pauck had already decided to take, namely, the efficacy of the historical method and the need to interpret Christianity anew to each age. But, in contrast to Tillich, Pauck undertook a defense of Barth in order to show that Barth's criticism of liberal Protestantism was largely correct. Ultimately, however, Pauck discovered that Barth had neglected historical criticism, and what started out as a defense of neo-orthodoxy ended as a rejection. All of this lies between the covers of Pauck's 1931 publication, *Karl Barth: Prophet of a New Christianity?*¹⁴

In Edwin Ewart Aubrey's review of this book, he points to the personal struggle which Pauck underwent during its conception:

Mr. Pauck has changed his mind about Barthian theology during the writing of this book. We cannot be grateful enough that he did not rewrite the earlier part to conform to his later opinion. That would have made the book more consistent. As it stands it represents an honest struggle with an attractive point of view that failed to satisfy. The author's questions are thus no mere rhetorical questions, but genuine steps in his own intellectual quest. For this reason he takes the reader along with him as he goes, and the book holds the interest of a novel because the outcome is so genuinely uncertain. Those of us who have been close to the author while the book was written know how very genuine the struggle was.¹⁵

Since the Barth book, Pauck's intellectual quest has become more clearly defined. He has remained interested in Barth but fundamentally opposed to him. He has remained a friend of Tillich, but has been concerned, above all, to use and improve the methods of Harnack, Holl, and Troeltsch. His feeling of kinship with H. Richard Niebuhr and Reinhold Niebuhr has largely been due to the fact that the Niebuhrs underwent the same development in another environment, and that their outlook was also shaped by the ideas of Ernst Troeltsch. Pauck was able, therefore, to cooperate with H. Richard Niebuhr in writing *The Church Against the World* and to publish many articles for *Christianity and Society* and *Radical Religion*.

(now *Christianity and Crisis*), journals edited by Reinhold Niebuhr.

Pauck's book on Barth was so successful, he was called to become professor of Systematic Theology at Hartford Seminary, but Chicago Theological Seminary persuaded him to remain on its faculty. It was at this juncture that he finally determined to be an historical theologian as well as a church historian, and in his teaching and writing ever since he has managed equally well to occupy both chairs.

As one interested in Protestant theology, particularly in the Reformation, Pauck has always been interested in Martin Luther more than in the other Reformers. His identification with Luther has been so exaggerated that one is sometimes given the erroneous impression that he knows all about Luther and little about anyone else. A former colleague at Union Theological Seminary spread the legend that Pauck was the only man in America who had read all that Martin Luther ever wrote! This legend, according to Pauck, is "almost true." Nevertheless, his book on Luther's *Romans*—referred to as a "miniature masterpiece" by Jaroslav Pelikan—is one evidence for his mastery of the verbose and volatile Reformer.¹⁶

It is perhaps not superfluous to add that Pauck's expertise does not lie in Luther alone. As a church historian he is interested not only in the history of doctrine and the history of the Protestant Reformation but also in the history of the Reformers' theology. As an historian of Protestant theology, he is interested in the period beginning with the Reformation to the present. As a church historian and an historian of Protestant theological thought, he is interested in Bucer, Schleiermacher, Troeltsch, Anglicanism, Tillich, and theological liberalism. It is to these horizons of *Theologie-Geschichte* that Pauck's intellectual quest has brought him.

Pauck's first host in this country was the faculty of Chicago Theological Seminary and the Congregational Church. The Lutherans, of course, were hospitable, too, because they assumed that a German must be a Lutheran. Actually, he was a member in Germany of the Evangelische Kirche. In America Pauck chose to become a Congregationalist (he was ordained in 1928) because of the freedom this denomination provided. He is convinced that if Harnack and Troeltsch had been given such a choice they would have chosen as he did.

Pauck's first experiences in the American Protestant churches baffled him. But he noted that everyone shook hands and made the stranger welcome, that laymen were active and participated in the life of the church, and that in local situations denominations did not

differ. Those characteristics appealed to him, although today he is convinced that American Protestantism suffers from over-activism and that if it is to survive it needs to do less, to think more, and especially to become aware of its historical roots! He writes:

Today, the human situation including that of the churches, must be handled by critical anthropological thinking and by means of decisions derived from clear, judicious, historical thinking. Barth says that church history is merely an auxiliary theological discipline, because he believes that the church must be guided by dogmatic theology oriented to the Bible. But dogmatic speculation, even if it is based on the Bible, cannot help us. What we need most is historical understanding and not theosophy. The churches have more need of a Harnack than of a Barth.¹⁷

For a time, Pauck was an activist himself, that is to say, an active participant in the ecumenical movement. In the early 1940's he very rigorously furthered the merger between the Evangelical Reformed and the Congregational Churches. In 1948, he was a theological consultant to the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches and he was later involved in preparations for the conference at Evanston. For years he was a chairman of the Chicago Ecumenical Discussion group. Originally he had great hopes that the ecumenical movement would succeed, but he was gradually disappointed in representatives who sought independence rather than ecumenicity, becoming disillusioned and finally resigning from further participation in the councils in the mid-1950's. He has been criticized for this move, perhaps with some justification, but once he makes up his mind there is no turning back. Even his critics will admit that his true calling lies in scholarship rather than in committee work. His contribution to the American church scene lies in communicating that the ideas of men like Harnack and Troeltsch are important.

American Protestantism [he says] is on the whole less bound to tradition than European Protestantism, but the American denominations have not yet learned to understand themselves as historical movements. If they are willing to use the opportunity with which their freedom has provided them, that of practicing a *historical responsibility* toward the Christian legacy, they may become the bearers of a Christian Renaissance. In such an event, Harnack will once more come into his own.¹⁸

From the beginning of his career Pauck found eager audiences among college students as well as church groups. He traveled widely and perhaps too often during the thirties, forties, and fifties. It was not until the mid-1960's that he cut down his lecture tours in favor of

completing several volumes in historical theology and church history. By then he had been invited to give virtually every major lectureship on American university and college campuses as well as abroad. An early reaction to Pauck the lecturer is to be found in a letter written around 1927¹⁹ and can perhaps just as easily be applied to Pauck as he is today:

I want to tell you what a wonderfully fine talk Mr. Pauck gave our ministers' meeting yesterday. I am always impressed by him. He has a remarkably acute and penetrating mind. He has the judicial quality of the profound scholar. He is original. And he is such an attractive personality—modest, winsome, and lovable. One can see at a first glance and hearing that he is a spiritual soul. I should say that he was a mystic, but not too much of a mystic—just the right combination of the fervid and imagining with the rationalistic makeup. I think he is a poet as well as an historian to the manner born; and that blend fashions the real philosopher and theologian, does it not?²⁰

Pauck's lecture tours are too numerous to set down here, but it is of interest to see a sample of the pace he set himself during the Chicago years, where by 1939 Albert Palmer, O. S. Davis' successor, described him as "C.T.S.'s outstanding representative at colleges and youth groups." A typical year, 1938: he preached 20 times at various places and occasions, and addressed ministers' meetings of different denominations on theological and historical subjects. He lectured in the following colleges and seminaries: New Jersey College for Women, Michigan State, Elmhurst, Oberlin, Olivet, Dubuque, Skidmore, Hamilton, Union, Rochester, Elmira, Union Theological Seminary, New Brunswick Theological School, and the Evangelical Seminary at Naperville. In November of that year, he gave the annual lectures on religion at Hollins College, Virginia, and in February he was the leader of the annual religious forum at Wellesley College. He also lectured at the annual St. Louis Young People's Conferences, the Arkansas State Student Conference, and the Silver Bay Summer Student Conference. During the summer of 1938 he taught at the Friends' Summer School at Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, and at Union Theological Seminary in New York. In addition to this, the March 1937 issue of *Church History* contains his presidential address before the American Society of Church History, on "The Nature of Protestantism." He also contributed an article to *Radical Religion* edited by Reinhold Niebuhr, entitled "The Christian Gospel for Today."²¹

Pauck's travels were fortunately not limited to lecture tours alone.

He and his wife Olga arranged to spend summer vacations abroad as often as they could. Their personal ties to Germany were deep; Pauck's parents were still alive, so were Olga's children by her first marriage and her young grandchildren, and they looked forward to seeing her. It was not until the outbreak of the Second World War that travel to Europe came to an abrupt and unhappy end.

When National Socialism first appeared on the scene in Germany, Wilhelm Pauck had been in the United States for eight years. He had always believed in the democracy of the Weimar Constitution and hated reactionary and totalitarian politics. From the beginning he had a pronounced dislike for Hitler and his party, and it was because of the latter's success that he decided to remain in the United States even at a time when he might have returned. In a speech given at the opening exercises at Chicago Theological Seminary in November 1939, Pauck said,

I have detested this movement from that moment when it became clear to me that by its will to destroy the Christian foundations of Western civilization, it would lead Germany and the rest of the western world on the road to cultural ruin. I recognize that it was not very difficult for me so to judge National Socialism and to separate myself from many individual Germans whom I love and to whom I am bound by intimate ties; for, by a very good fortune, I have been in the United States for many years and have been able to work here for a Christian civilization under much more auspicious circumstances than post-war Germany could ever provide. And, I say, therefore, that now, when, this new senseless war has brought the tragedy of the World War to a climax in Germany and in all Europe, I will dedicate myself as an American to the building of a Christian civilization with a more burning passion and earnestness than I have ever shown before.²²

During and shortly before the war years, the Paucks opened their doors to many German refugee professors with whom they became lasting friends. One of the earliest refugees was Paul Tillich, who always referred to Pauck as his "guide to America." Both Pauck and Tillich spent untold hours helping their European refugee friends find positions in America. Pauck lost touch with his family in Germany. His father died in Paris during the war, and his mother died in Berlin, both of natural causes. His brother was drafted toward the war's end and was taken prisoner by the English a day before the armistice was declared. His sister fled Berlin with her three small daughters before the Russian take-over.

Pauck had prayed for the defeat of National Socialism before the war, and he worked just as hard afterward for the release of healing

powers to those who survived it. In an attempt to bring the Germans back into the human family he played an important role in reestablishing relations with German universities. In 1945 he was offered a position in the American military government in Germany, but was unable to accept it because he could not obtain leave from the University of Chicago. A year or so later, when Robert Hutchins initiated the professorial exchange between Frankfurt and Chicago, Pauck was invited to be a member of the first group of nine professors.²³ Another year later, upon his return to Chicago, Pauck was made chairman of the committee that supervised continuation of the exchange.

There is no time of Wilhelm Pauck's life about which he speaks more frequently or enthusiastically, or about which he has more anecdotes to entertain one with, than the year 1948, when in April he and other professors flew to Frankfurt. They were met at the airport by a group of newspaper photographers and reporters who interviewed them. Later they drove to the Carlton Hotel in Frankfurt, where they had been scheduled to stay for a few days and where in fact they were forced to remain until the end of May because housing was so hard to find. Pauck, in one of many letters to his wife Olga, describes his first walk in the darkness of Frankfurt as depressing. There were ruins everywhere, and sinister characters who seemed about some shady business. The streets were swept clean, despite the ruins; the people were cleanly dressed but wore drab and mended clothes. Pauck seems to have been impressed by the fact that the people wore good shoes. He noted that they seemed sour and depressed and that no one laughed or talked loudly. It made him uneasy that in the midst of these ruins he and the Chicago men lived in American quarters with food and conveniences.

During 1948, and again in 1951, Pauck lectured at many places in Germany. With Frankfurt as a center he visited Marburg, Berlin, Göttingen, Wiesbaden, Erlangen, Tübingen, Stuttgart, Giessen, and Bad Nauheim. During these years, train travel in Germany was a thing of horrors. The trains had no windows and were dark from the absence of electricity. Military cars were available only upon special application. Pauck's group eventually got hold of a Buick and a driver as well, which eased traveling discomforts to some extent.

Things did not always go smoothly, even then. After the chauffeur had driven the lecturers around for several weeks, Pauck kidded him about his lack of interest in the subject of the lectures. Reluctantly the chauffeur agreed to listen to Pauck's lecture in Bad Wildungen,

even though he was afraid to leave the car unattended. His anxiety was justified. Upon returning to the car after the lecture, they found that it had been broken into. Not only had a suitcase of clothes been stolen, but also the lecture notes for a course Pauck was giving at Marburg University on the history of Christian thought which he had worked up in the United States the previous summer. Pauck was forced to lecture from memory during the succeeding weeks.

The contrast between American and German students and their relations to their professors made a particularly keen impression on Pauck during his visit. It displeased him that the moment he entered the lecture room in any German university the students at once leaped to attention. He permitted this behavior on the first few occasions but then said to the students, "I am a professor, but that doesn't mean I come from another world."

"But", they replied, "in this case you do!"

The students were unable to cure themselves of this compulsion. Once Pauck was delighted when a student objected to something he had said. "Good," he thought, "we are going to have a discussion." But the student apologized to him the next day. Pauck said to him. "This is the worst thing you could have done. Do you still believe what you said yesterday?" The student said, "Yes." Pauck said, "Then don't deny it." But the student remained diffident for the rest of the course.

Pauck's first postwar visit to Berlin was especially saddening for him. The streets were recognizable, but the Breitestrasse, where he had lived for so many years, was in ruins. The old house had caved in, and only the first story and part of the second were standing. While in Berlin, he met his Wingolsite friends, who had arranged an evening for him, and was amazed by how little, if at all, they had changed in 25 years. He stayed in Harnack Haus in Dahlem, lectured at the university and at Kirchliche Hochschule in Zehlendorf, had conferences with church leaders, and held discussions with people who held various educational and religious offices in the military government.

Pauck's relations with his family were also reestablished. One morning in 1948, while he was lecturing at the University of Frankfurt, he noted a stranger in his audience, a very thin, blonde German whom he did not recognize. After the lecture, the man came to him and introduced himself as Paul Pauck, his brother. He had just been released from a prison camp in England, where he had worked on a farm. Later, too, Pauck was reunited with his sister and a great

number of other relatives who met together in Wester-Enger. It was the largest reunion of the Paucks held before or since!

The most dramatic event of the year, however, concerned the arrival of Robert Hutchins in Germany. Pauck and his colleagues had tried for weeks to secure lodging for Hutchins in Frankfurt, finally managing to get a room for him. On the day of his arrival, Pauck and several others hired three jeeps to meet Hutchins at the airport. As Hutchins came off the plane, however, he was whisked away by a huge Cadillac. Half an hour or so later, Pauck got a telephone call from Hutchins: "Where *are* all of you?" Hutchins then explained to the baffled professor that he was at "Victory House," the villa occupied by the American commander-in-chief, at that time General Clay.

Hutchins held a major speech at the aula in Frankfurt while on this visit. He had Pauck help him with German pronunciation and grammar the night before. Pauck's response to it was characteristically admiring, "Well, Hutchins was a great success! His speech at the aula was greeted with the loudest, most spontaneous applause I have heard since we came to Germany. He is really a wonderful man, perfectly natural and not at all pretentious. We had luncheon with the top general (directly under Clay) right after the academic festivities."²⁴

The year 1948-49 came to an end, and Pauck returned to America and Chicago, where a storm was brewing over the Federated Theological Faculty. This federation had been inaugurated in October 1942. More than a thousand persons, including representatives of some two hundred academic institutions, attended the impressive ceremony in the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. The new faculty united the faculties of the University Divinity School, the Chicago Theological Seminary, the Meadville Theological School, and the Disciples' Divinity House, without disturbing the autonomy of these institutions.²⁵ The architect of the federation was Ernest Cadman Colwell in cooperation with Messieurs Palmer, Ames, and Snow. Their desire was

a form of cooperation . . . more conformable to Christian principles. We set down as the basic framework for the Federation the following goals: First, the elimination of hurtful institutional competition. Second, the elimination of invidious distinctions within the faculty. We felt the necessity of having a faculty which was in effect a seamless robe, no one of whose members could assume a holier-than-thou attitude toward others. Third, the elimination of wasteful duplications in the appointment of faculty members. Fourth, the maintenance

of the individual institution's character and vitality. We felt that the continuance of financial independence and administration for the several institutions would lead to variety and experimentation within the Federation. Fifth, the establishment of cooperation in a pattern that would mean that the growth in any one institution's strength would increase the strength of all. These were the goals which we hoped to attain through the establishment of the Federated Theological Faculty.²⁶

The federation, moreover, had the full backing of Chancellor Robert Hutchins, one of the few secular academicians who realized the importance and function of theological education at the university level. Indeed, in a public address given in 1946, he had said,

"I do believe that the Federated Theological Faculty is a great conception. I believe that I would be willing to admit it was a great conception even if it had been originated and executed at some other university. I believe that it is one of the most important developments in the history of American education."²⁷

But by the time 1948 had come and gone the individual interests of certain members had begun to make themselves known and there was unrest among members of the federation. Wilhelm Pauck and his colleagues, who had spent many hours helping to build the federation and who shared broad and generous views of education in opposition to special interests, thus found themselves facing the possibility that the "great conception" might disintegrate. They were convinced that the proper growth and maintenance of the federation could make it possible to build the greatest theological faculty in the country, complete with university backing, and a university press. As the early 1950's approached, however, Pauck realized that the grand plan would not be realized, and at the apogee of his Chicago career he resigned and accepted a call to Union Theological Seminary in New York.

It seems ironic that a man who had lived for so long in one city, where his friendships were deep and he was a man of influence beloved by students and colleagues, would leave a great university for a seminary which, while it was certainly one of the best in the country, was small and confining by comparison. Pauck was by then, as noted earlier, on all the major committees of the University of Chicago. He presided at the big lectures. At the annual trustee dinner in 1951, Pauck was speaker of the faculty, a high distinction. He belonged to several clubs and discussion groups and represented the university at all kinds of functions.²⁸

There were many reasons for leaving all this behind. In the first

place, he had been at Chicago for 27 years and felt that a change would be refreshing. Other offers had come his way before, but he had hesitated to leave while Hutchins was chancellor. Hutchins' resignation and Pauck's conviction that the federation would collapse changed all that. It was a matter of principle, for him and for a number of other professors, to resign. He also feared that he was becoming an "academic politician"; many appointments which he had not sought came his way by reason of seniority. He did not wish to continue administrative work; he wanted instead to complete his own work, which had so frequently been interrupted over the years. At his farewell speech in 1953, Pauck predicted the inevitable collapse of the federation. Collapse it did, in 1960.

It was not easy for the Paucks to leave Chicago and their friends. Moreover, Olga Pauck was ailing with heart disease, which troubled her until her death, and a dramatic change in her existence was bound to cause considerable strain. Nevertheless, they followed their destiny to New York, where for fourteen years Pauck lived and worked. Union Theological Seminary, under the presidency of Henry P. Van Dusen, was in the heyday of its success, with a crop of excellent students and a sterling faculty, best known of whom were Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. Pauck's friendship with both these men was an attractive feature of his move. New York City, with its cultural proliferation, was another. The community of Union Seminary, replete with sparkling personalities, made up for many of the friends whom the Paucks had left behind, although Olga Pauck never ceased to miss her Chicago friends and Pauck for his part missed the variety of faculties which the University of Chicago had provided. In New York, as in Chicago, many friends outside the seminary were thus to be included in the Pauck social circle—men from the medical, historical, legal, and scientific branches of learning. Pauck's interest in painting, music, and gourmet cooking were given new impetus at the "crossroads of the world."

His Union years were marked by continuing success and personal sorrows. In 1960 Pauck succeeded Tillich and Niebuhr, by then *emeriti*, in the Charles A. Briggs graduate chair. Henry Van Dusen said at the time that it was the most distinguished chair on the faculty. In 1961, he delivered the introductory address at the second Luther Research Congress in Münster, Germany. He published his book on Luther's *Romans* in 1961. He won a large graduate student following at Union and succeeded in avoiding administrative posts which were offered to him. Between 1958 and 1963 Pauck sustained some severe

illness and three major operations. Finally, too, his wife Olga's gallant fight against death was lost; she died in her sleep on January 15, 1963.

He was very reticent about his personal affairs and he treated other persons in such a way that they felt that he respected that realm of particular autonomy in which each one must live his own most personal life. But he was also a very social being. He loved to be in company, and his friends were many.²⁹

Although written by Wilhelm Pauck about another person, these words apply equally well to him, so that to dwell at any length at all on personal details about his marriage to Olga Dietz—except in the most general way—would be to betray him. Their life together was always interesting and full. She had a vivacity and an interest in people which was genuine and tremendously outgoing; she really cared about persons and their lives and was not motivated by sheer curiosity. She was direct and open in her relations and despised pretentiousness as much as her husband did. She loved to entertain, and throughout the Chicago years their home was open to all their friends and to her husband's students. In most social relations she served as a link between him and the world. Her interests were similar to her husband's; she read biography, history, and poetry in both English and German, for although she had been born in America of Dutch and German parents and lived at Washington Square, she had spent most of her youth in Germany. While the Paucks were in Chicago, a student wrote in an article about them that Olga Pauck was more German than her husband, probably because she spoke German so often. Once, when they crossed the Canadian border and the Canadian officer demanded proof of her nationality, she could not hand him anything to prove it. These amusing incidents annoyed her, for she was proud of being a native American. She was a woman of extremely neat habits and dressed with elegance. As a seamstress she was talented and a real perfectionist; she was a devoted mother and grandmother. Her zest for life, however, was perhaps her outstanding quality, and this accounts for her special popularity with the young, even in old age. When she died, a light went out not only for her husband but for many others.

The way in which Pauck coped with Olga's death was remarkable, for he was so open to all that he made it easy for his friends to comfort him. He tried for a time to come to terms with living alone, but his attempt failed. His many friends all rejoiced, therefore, when in November 1964 he married Marion Katherine Hausner, a graduate

of Union Theological Seminary and former editor of religious books at the Oxford University Press. Pauck had known her since 1954.

The wedding, purposely limited to a handful of close friends and family, was the last occasion upon which the late Paul Tillich, who officiated, and Reinhold Niebuhr, the best man, were together in one place. Tillich, visibly moved by the marriage of his two friends, delivered a "sub-trinitarian" [as Paul Lehmann later described it] blessing. For he said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Ghost." It was for Niebuhr, as well, an event he cherished. "Bill", he said, "this is one of the most thrilling moments of my life. I haven't been best man in a hundred years!"

Today Pauck stands at the beginning of a new career, for in the fall of 1967 he became the first Distinguished Professor of Church History at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. There he will enjoy the freedom to complete several unfinished volumes on Protestantism and the Reformation and some works in the fields of biography and historical theology.

The image which Wilhelm Pauck projects is not one calculated to cover the reality of his person; he and his image are one and the same. As an historian he knows that fame is momentary and power elusive and that the loneliness of the long-distance runner is the destiny of those who seek perfection. It is not an exaggeration to say that the rule of Pauck's life, in thought and person, has grown most nearly to resemble the rule of Ernst Troeltsch, the only man who might be described as Pauck's "hero." In the address which Adolf von Harnack—cruelly fated to bury most of his friends—delivered at Troeltsch's funeral, he quoted this rule in Troeltsch's own words:

Only believing and bold men are able to perform the great task of formulating a new philosophy of history—skeptics or mystics, rational fanatics or omniscient historians are incapable of fulfilling it. . . . Reconstruction can be achieved only by someone who dares overcome history by history in order thus to build a platform for new productive action.³⁰

N O T E S

¹ Lippe, which lies about a hundred miles north of Laasphe, was the birthplace of Reinhold Niebuhr's father.

² The earliest evidence of the Pauck family is a crest dated 1446. The name itself means "metal band worn around the head," from *Paucke*, meaning a drum or the skin of a drum.

³ *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XXIX (November 1939) 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶ Before joining Holl's seminar, Pauck had been a member of Ernst Sellin's seminar on the Old Testament. For a time he thought of writing his thesis in that field, but his experience with Holl proved more alive and he decided to write his dissertation in church history. It is interesting to note about Sellin that he propounded the thesis that Moses was murdered by the ancient Jews, a thesis refuted by Old Testament scholars but used by Freud in his psychoanalysis of the Jewish people.

⁷ Pauck's interest in Harnack is fairly recent. He gave four (Tipple) lectures, later published by Oxford University Press, on Troeltsch and Harnack at Drew University, Madison, N.J., March 1967.

⁸ When Wingolf supported the Nazi movement, Pauck and others (e.g., Paul Tillich) resigned their memberships.

⁹ Universities and schools were required to register all incoming foreign students with the United States Department of Labor in order to prevent some pretenders from entering the country illegally.

¹⁰ Henry H. Walker was Professor of Church History at Chicago Theological Seminary at the time.

¹¹ *Chicago Theological Seminary Newsletter*, April 1926.

¹² Davis, Ozora S., "A Retrospect of Twenty Years," *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XIX (November 1929) 7.

¹³ "How I Spent My Summer," *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XVII (November 1927) 24.

¹⁴ Pauck has always been embarrassed by the title of this book, a misleading one which he did not select but which the publisher pressed upon him. Letters between Barth and Pauck after the book's publication reveal the interest Barth maintained in Pauck despite Pauck's rejection of his position.

¹⁵ *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XXII (January 1932) 54.

¹⁶ *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, XVIII (January 1963) 174.

¹⁷ *The Heritage of the Reformation*, revised and enlarged edition (Glencoe: Free Press, 1961; paperback edition, Oxford University, 1968), p. 358.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

¹⁹ Letter to Ozora Davis now in Pauck's private files.

²⁰ *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XXVIII (November 1938) 24.

²¹ "Theological Education as I See It," *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XXIX (November 1939) 2.

²² The first phase of this exchange was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, the second phase by the Ford Foundation.

²³ From a letter to Olga Pauck. Wives of exchange professors were not allowed to accompany their husbands to Germany at this time; indeed, no women were permitted entry.

²⁴ Cf. *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XXXIV (January 1944).

²⁵ Colwell, Ernest C., *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XXXIX (January 1949) 3.

²⁶ Hutchins, Robert, *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XXXVI (March 1946) 11.

²⁷ Pauck is a member of the American Renaissance Society and the Century Association of New York. He has received honorary degrees from: Gustavus Adolphus College, 1967, D.D.; Thiel College, 1967, Litt.D.; Upsala College, 1964, Litt.D.; and the University of Edinburgh, 1968, D.D.

²⁸ Pauck, Wilhelm, "Companion and Colleague," *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, XXXII (March 1942) 11, 12.

²⁹ Pauck, Wilhelm, *The Heritage of the Reformation*, p. 341.

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compiled by MARION HAUSNER PAUCK

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INDEXES

INDEX OF NAMES

Adams, John, 132-34
Aepinus, 38, 43
Agobard, 265
Aitken, Robert, 142, 157n.101
Alveldus, 52
Ames, Edward Scribner, 356
Amsdorf, Nicolaus, 77
Anne of Cleves, 42, 97
Aquinas, Thomas, 320
Aristotle, 320, 323
Athanasius, 257, 266
Aubrey, Edwin Ewart, 349
Augustine, 48, 63n.75, 145, 264-68, 325, 327, 332n.5
Baier, Johann Wilhelm, 213
Bale, John, 111, 116
Barlowe, Jerome, 104
Barnes, Robert, 35-66, 97, 103, 105, 108-11
Barth, Karl, 3, 4, 6, 253, 322, 330, 341, 343, 346, 349, 351, 361n.14
Basnage, Jacques de Beauval, 128
Baugher, H. L., 223n.42
Baur, Ferdinand Christian, 216, 229n.125
Bayle, Pierre, 144
Beausobre, Isaac de, 142
Belsham, Thomas, 125, 130
Bentham, Jeremy, 158n.134
Benz, Ernst, 258, 269
Berkeley, George, 204, 226n.74
Beza, Theodore, 72
Bigg, Charles, 264, 265
Billington, Ray Allen, 222
Bilney, Thomas, 37, 46, 56, 108, 109
Bismarck, Otto von, 188, 297
Blackburne, Francis, 143, 144, 157n.109
Blumhardt, Christoph, the Younger, 318
Boehme, Jacob, 320, 324
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 130, 134
Bonaventure, 319
Bonemilch, Johannes, 335
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 187, 214, 227n.112, 328
Bonner, Edmund, 108
Bornkamm, Heinrich, 256, 297, 298
Borromeo, Charles, 261
Bossert, Gustav, 198
Bradwardine, Thomas, 51
Brandt, Geeraert, 143
Brenz, Johann, 22
Bromiley, Thomas, 115
Brooks, Phillips, 191
Bruine, M. C. Slotemaker de, 255
Buber, Martin, 232
Bucer, Martin, 5, 70-73, 105, 342, 350
Bugenhagen, Johann, 15, 22, 38, 39, 46, 63n.52, 102, 103. *See also* Pomeran (us)
Bull, Henry, 114
Bullinger, Heinrich, 74, 90, 108
Bunyan, John, 113
Burnet, Gilbert, 143
Busleiden, Jerome, 58n.3
Calvin, John, 11, 30, 67-96, 143, 145, 189, 266, 285, 319, 329, 341
Carlstadt, Andreas Bodenstein, 95n.89, 147
Channing, William Ellery, 129
Charles V, 79
Chemnitz, Martin, 205
Cheney, Richard, 106
Christian III, 43
Cicero, Marcus Tullius, 36
Clay, Lucius, 356
Clement of Alexandria, 265

Clemmer, Robert D., 158n.137
 Cobbett, William, 156n.77
 Cochlaeus, Johann, 40
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 125, 151, 158n.130
 Colet, John, 103
 Collin, Nils, 122
 Collins, Anthony, 146
 Colwell, Ernest, 356
 Conrad, Joseph, 5
 Cooper, Thomas, 125
 Coverdale, Miles, 36
 Cranmer, Thomas, 42, 97, 98, 105, 106, 108
 Grantz, David, 143
 Crodel, Marcus, 93n.31
 Cromwell, Thomas, 40, 97, 108
 Crosby, Howard, 191
 Cruciger, Caspar, 22
 Cyril of Alexandria, 257

Davis, Ozora S., 346, 352
 Deissmann, Adolf, 349
 Della Mirandola, Pico, 109
 Denck, Johannes, 28
 Denifle, Heinrich, 255, 260, 261, 263, 296, 298
 Descartes, René, 320
 Dickens, A. G., 102, 116
 Diem, Herman, 231
 Dilthey, Friedrich, 265, 275-77
 Doumergue, Emile, 71, 73
 Dryander, Francis. *See* Enzinas, Francisco de
 Dürer, Albrecht, 326
 Duns Scotus, 36, 320
 Duperon, Jacques Davy, 144
 Dupin, Louis Ellies, 143
 Dupré, Louis, 240, 242, 243, 246

Eck, Johann Maier von, 28, 110, 149
 Eckhart, Meister, 323
 Edward VI, 41, 97, 98, 105, 106
 Eekhof, Albert, 68
 Elizabeth I, 41, 98, 106, 107
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 189
 Emser, Hieronymus, 52

Enzinas, Francisco de, 94n.66
 Epiphanius, 254
 Erasmus, Desiderius, 19, 26, 28, 29, 35, 44, 48, 49, 58n.3, 102, 103, 109, 148, 324, 341, 342
 Eucken, Rudolf, 343
 Eusebius of Caesarea, 127

Fabre, J. C., 126
 Farel, Guillaume, 72, 92n.27, 93n.28, 94n.53
 Fisher, John, 37, 97, 98, 102, 103, 105
 Fitzmaurice, William, 122
 Flacius, Matthias Illyricus, 127
 Fleming, William, 204
 Fleury, Claude, 126, 127
 Flotow, Friedrich von, 337
 Fox, Edward, 40, 41
 Foxe, John, 38, 60n.25, 98, 99, 100, 105, 106, 107-17
 Francis of Assisi, 319
 Franck, Sebastian, 295
 Franklin, Benjamin, 134, 155n.66
 Frederick III, Elector of Brandenburg, 142
 Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, 20
 Freud, Sigmund, 334n.77, 361n.6
 Frith, John, 97, 104, 108, 109, 111, 113
 Froschauer, Christoph, 73
 Fry, Jacob, 207
 Fuerbringer, Ludwig, 223n.39

Gabriel of Saconay, 85, 95n.93
 Gace, William, 114
 Gairdner, James, 105
 Gansfort, Johan Wessel, 265
 Gardiner, Stephen, 43, 100, 105, 108
 Geismar, Eduard, 231
 George, Duke of Saxony, 22, 38, 40
 Giannone, Pietro, 143
 Gibbon, Edward, 126, 127
 Glick, G. Wayne, 262

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 31, 267, 273n.111, 297, 339
Gogarten, Friedrich, 317
Gottschalk of Orbais, 51
Grabmann, Martin, 254
Gregory I, 48
Gregory VII, 158n.133
Grindal, Edmund, 106
Grisar, Hartmann, 261, 262, 298
Grundtvig, Nicholas F. S., 159–86

Haller, William, 109
Harbsmeier, Gotz, 184n.1
Harnack, Adolf von, 2, 3, 4, 68, 253–74, 275, 276, 283, 297, 298, 341–43, 349–51, 360, 361n.7
Harnack, Agnes von Zahn. *See* Zahn-Harnack, Agnes von
Harnack, Theodosius, 256, 259–62
Hartley, David, 146
Harvey, A. E., 5
Hay, Charles A., 224n.45
Hecker, Isaac Thomas, 189, 191, 192
Heath, Nicholas, 60n.25
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 277, 294
Henkel, Ambrose, 197
Henkel, Socrates, 197
Henry VIII, 37, 39–43, 57, 61n.43, 97–99, 103, 105–8
Heshusius, Tilemann, 70
Hitler, Adolf, 297, 353
Hodge, Charles, 205
Holl, Karl, 4, 5, 253, 262, 264, 267, 296, 298, 307, 308, 317, 318, 321, 332nn.5, 6, 339, 341–43, 345, 348, 349, 361n.6
Hooker, Thomas, 116
Horace, Quintus Flaccus, 26
Horton, Douglas, 3, 346
Hus, John, 110
Hutchins, Robert, 346, 354, 356–58

Irenaeus, 265, 266
Jackson, Samuel M., 217, 218

Jacobs, Henry Eyster, 106, 197, 208, 220, 224nn.44–45
Janssen, Johannes, 198
Jay, John, 191
Jefferson, Thomas, 121, 130, 134, 135, 137, 139
Jewel, John, 112, 116
John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, 60n.25, 149
Jonas, Justus, 38
Jones, William, 136
Joye, George, 105

Kähler, Martin, 315
Kant, Immanuel, 288, 289, 297
Kierkegaard, Soren, 231–52, 159, 174, 322
Kirwan, Robert, 136
Kliefoth, Theodor, 214, 215
Knaake, Joachim Friedrich Karl, 199
Köhler, Walther, 299
Köstlin, Julius, 197–99, 208, 263
Kott, Jan, 6
Krauth, Charles Philip, 187, 215
Krauth, Charles Porterfield, 187–230
Krotel, G. Frederick, 191, 208, 223n.28
Krüger, Gustav, 344
Kübel, Robert, 255
Kuntze, John Christopher, 228n.121
Kurtz, Heinrich, 229n.124

Lamprecht, Annemarie (nee Pauck), 336, 355
Lang, August, 69, 71
Lange, Johann Peter, 217
Lasco, John à, 105
Latimer, Hugh, 37, 38, 98, 105, 106, 108
Latomus, Bartholomaeus, 28
La Trobe, Benjamin, 143
Laval, Etienne-Abel, 143
Law, Edmund, 143, 144
Leclerc, Charles, 138
Lehmann, Paul, 360

Leo X, 37, 144
 Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, 277
 Lindhardt, P. G., 185n.7
 Lindsey, Theophilus, 125, 130
 Lipsius, Richard Adelbert, 260, 272n.63

Løgstrup, K. E., 184n.1
 Loisy, Alfred, 271n.27
 Lome, Jeffery, 110
 Lubieniecki, Stanislas, 143
 Luthardt, Christoph Ernst, 225n.-57
 Luther, Katharina, 249

Machiavelli, Niccolò, 296
 Mann, Wilhelm Julius, 203, 211, 215, 216, 219, 223n.38, 228nn.-120, 121, 122
 Marcion, 264-67
 Marshall, William, 105
 Marsilius of Padua, 44
 Mary Tudor, 105, 106, 108
 Marx, Karl, 278, 312, 318
 Maurice, Duke of Albertine Saxony, 149
 May, Henry F., 188
 Meinecke, Friedrich, 299
 Meinhold, Peter, 86
 Melanchthon, Philipp, 16, 20, 22, 29, 38, 40, 41, 67, 72-76, 79, 88, 110, 147, 148, 150, 151, 260, 282, 316, 317
 Mentz, G., 59, 60n.25
 Meyer, Carl S., 106
 Middleton, Erasmus, 142
 Milner, Isaac, 140, 141, 151, 156n.96
 Milner, Joseph, 140, 141, 151
 Milton, John, 144
 Möhler, Johann Adam, 198, 225-n.52
 More, Thomas, 39, 43, 44, 98, 103-5, 108
 Morris, John Gottlob, 198, 208
 Mosheim, Johann Lorenz von, 126, 127
 Mozley, James Frederic, 109

Nabokov, Vladimir, 5
 Neander, August, 216, 266
 Nelson, Horatio, 155n.68
 Nevin, John W., 202, 214, 224n.45
 Newman, John Henry, 198
 Newton, Thomas, 115
 Nicolls, Samuel J., 195
 Nicholas of Cusa, 322
 Nichols, James H., 188, 214, 347
 Niebuhr, H. Richard, 349
 Niebuhr, Reinhold, 349, 350, 353, 358, 360
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 318, 320
 Nyholm, Paul C., 184n.1

Occam, William, 44
 Ochino, Bernard, 105
 Oecolampadius, Johannes, 83-85, 100
 Oettinger, Friedrich Christoph, 320
 O'Gorman, John, 218
 Olsson, Olof, 193, 194
 Origen, 265

Palmer, Albert, 352, 356
 Parnell, Thomas, 36
 Pauck, Hans, 337
 Pauck, Olga (nee Dietz), 344, 353, 354, 358, 359, 361n.24
 Pauck, Paul, 336, 355
 Pelikan, Jaroslav, 350
 Perry, Ralph Barton, 271n.28
 Pezel, Christoph, 93n.31, 94n.53
 Philip of Hesse, 41, 73
 Pighius, Albert, 78, 79, 85, 88
 Pius VI, 155n.67
 Pius X, 261
 Plato, 6, 52
 Plautus, Titus Marcius, 36
 Plotinus, 323, 333n.42
 Pomeran(us), 38, 40. *See also* Bugenhagen, Johann
 Priestley, Joseph, 121-58
 Pufendorf, Samuel, 158n.135
 Pusey, Edward B., 214, 215

Ragaz, Leonhard, 318
 Ranke, Leopold von, 221n.71, 276

Reinhard, Franz Volkmar, 164
Rhegius, Urbanus, 100
Ridley, Nicholas, 108
Ritschl, Albrecht, 3, 5, 255, 258–
 62, 268, 272n.63, 277, 299
Robertson, William, 141, 142
Rogers, John, 97
Roscoe, William, 143
Rothe, Richard, 298
Roy, Rajah Rammohum, 152n.2
Roy, William, 99, 104
Ruchat, Abraham, 143
Rückert, H., 303n.52
Rupp, Ernest Gordon, 113, 122,
 153n.5
Rush, Benjamin, 135
Rutt, John Towell, 152n.2, 153n.
 10, 157n.99

Sadoleto, Cardinal, 73
Sandys, Edwin, 106, 111, 116
Sarrau, Henri de, 70
Schaff, David Schley, 218
Schaff, Philip, 187–230
Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm
 Joseph, 320, 324
Schleiermacher, Friedrich, 1, 3,
 288, 350
Schmid, Heinrich Friedrich
 Ferdinand, 224n.45
Schmidt, Frederick Augustus,
 212, 213
Schmucker, Beale Melanchthon,
 202, 205, 207
Schmucker, Samuel, 187, 190, 193,
 203, 215, 219, 224n.45, 228n.120
Schneider, Karl, 199
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 320
Seckendorf, Veit Ludwig von,
 60n.25
Seeberg, Reinhold, 4
Seiss, Joseph Augustus, 197, 202,
 207
Selbst, Joseph, 272n.69
Sellin, Ernst, 361n.6
Semler, Johann Salomo, 126, 127
Servetus, Michael, 88
Shakespeare, William, 6, 304
Shore, Samuel, 123
Simpson, Matthew, 191
Sleidan (us), Johannes, 110, 142
Slšk, Johannes, 242
Smith, Preserved, 122
Snow, Sydney B., 356
Socinus, Faustus, 88
Socrates, 240
Soden, Hans Freiherr von, 255
Søe, N., 184n.1
Sommers, Thomas, 110
Southe, Robert, 125
Spaeth, Adolph, 199
Spalatin, Georg, 12
Spalding, John Lancaster, 196
Spengler, Oswald, 338, 339
Stahl, F. J., 297
Stange, Karl, 341
Staupitz, John, 14
Stephan, Martin, 210
Stone, John Hurford, 136, 137,
 150, 156n.77
Sturm, John, 72
Suelflow, August, 223n.39
Sultzer, Simon, 70

Tappert, Theodore G., 225n.47
Taylor, William M., 191
Terence, 36
Tertullian, 266
Thoreau, Henry David, 189
Tillich, Paul, 258, 304–34, 343,
 348–50, 353, 358, 360, 361n.8
Titius, Arthur, 343
Tjernagel, Neelak, 106
Tolstoy, Count Leo Nikolaevich,
 266
Toulmin, Joshua, 135
Trietschke, Heinrich von, 299
Troeltsch, Ernst, 3, 4, 275–303,
 307, 339–44, 349–51, 360, 361–
 n.7
Tunstall, Cuthbert, 104
Tyndale, Matthew, 144
Tyndale, William, 36, 39, 97, 98,
 103, 104, 108, 109, 111, 113
Überweg, Friedrich, 204, 226n.74

Ustick, S. C., 126

Valla, Lorenzo, 109

Van Dusen, Henry P., 358

Vermigli, Peter Martyr, 105

Viret, Pierre, 76

Walch, Johann Georg, 199

Walker, Henry H., 346, 361n.10

Walther, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm, 187-230

Warham, William, 37, 102

Washington, George, 134

Weber, Max, 277, 278, 284, 307

Weiss, Albert Maria, 255, 261-63

Wentz, Abdel Ross, 223, 224n.42

Wesley, Charles, 113

Wesley, John, 113, 141

Wessel, Johan. *See* Gansfort, Johan Wessel

Westphal, Joachim, 69, 84, 85, 89

White, William, 133

Whitehead, Alfred North, 6

Winchester, Elhanan, 129

Wolf, Edmund J., 205

Wolfenbüttel, Heinz von, 69

Wolff, Otto, 256

Wolph, John, 70

Wolsey, Thomas, 38, 98, 103, 108

Wycliffe, John, 44, 51, 56, 84, 108

Yeomans, Edward D., 229n.124

Yoder, Donald H., 188

Zahn-Harnack, Agnes von, 264, 267

Zeeden, Ernst Walter, 88

Zwingli, Huldreich, 11, 24, 27, 67, 69, 71, 73, 76, 84, 147, 149

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